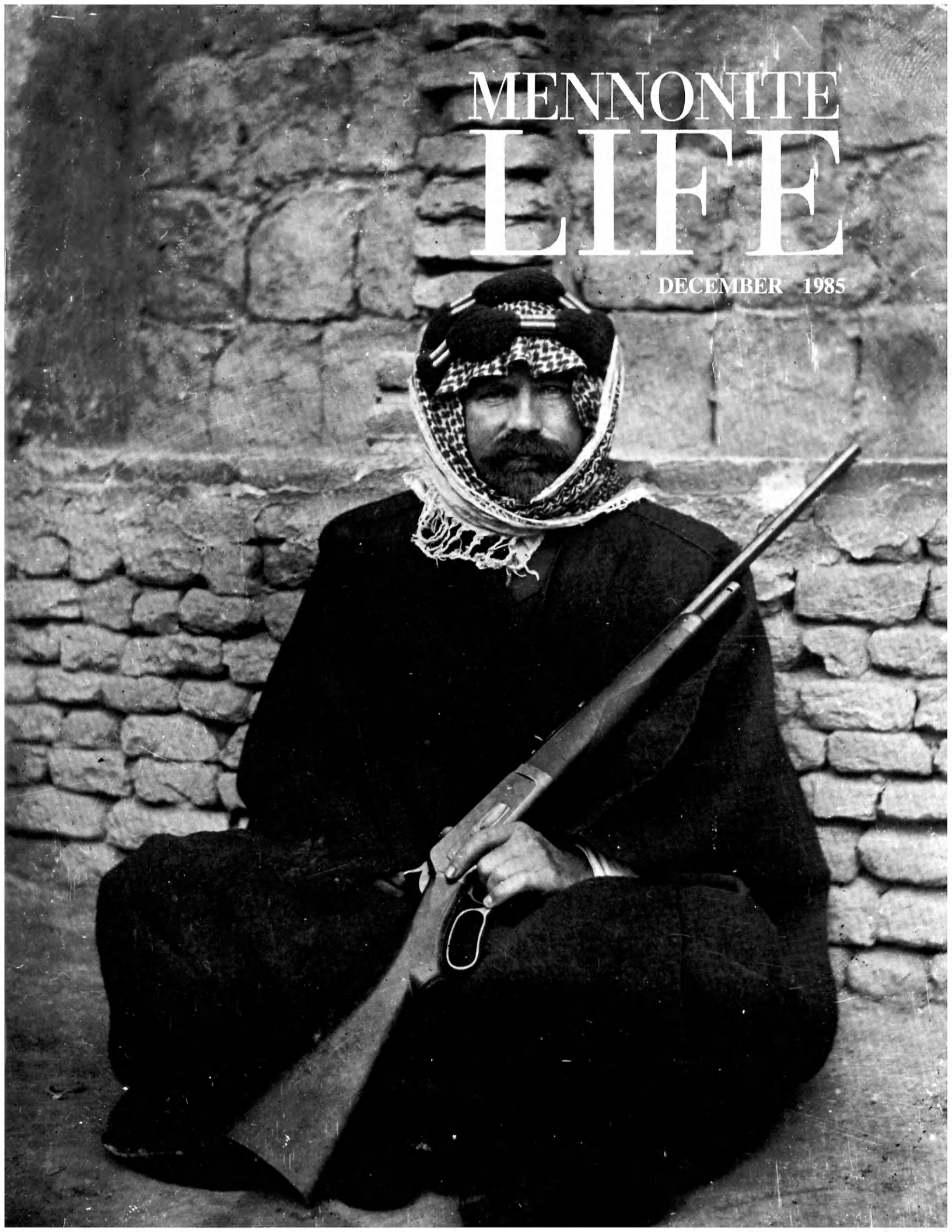
# MENNONITE LIFE

DECEMBER 1985



# In this Issue

This issue features a great variety of topics. John B. Toews, Professor of History at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, has translated the diary of Jacob Epp, who resided in the Kherson District of the Chortitza Colony in the 1860s and 1870s. Epp provides a unique view of life in a Mennonite village and especially of the issue of *Zahlengesang* (number singing). The original diary is at the Mennonite Heritage Center, Winnipeg.

Kimberly Schmidt, a 1984 graduate of Bethel College, sketches and interprets the history of the North Newton chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in a revision of her Social Science Seminar paper. As peace studies become popular in the 1980s, it is important to analyze the long-term commitment to education for peacemaking of the WILPF.

The previous issue examined the career of General Conference missionary, Rodolphe Petter. Keith Sprunger, Professor of History at Bethel College, provides additional insights into Petter's interests. Petter purchased several cuneiform tablets from Edgar J. Banks, who directed expeditions to Babylonia for the University of Chicago. The tablets are now in the Kauffman Museum at Bethel College.

Mark Becker, a 1985 graduate of Bethel College, has prepared a summary of his Social Science Seminar paper of Mennonite resistance to draft registration in the 1980s. The original paper examines the cases of nearly twenty individuals who were indicted from 1982 through 1984.

*Mennonite Life* is pleased to publish a revision of William Juhnke's "Anabaptism and Mormonism: A Study in Comparative History," which appeared in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal,* volume 2 (1982). Juhnke graduated from Bethel College and teaches history at Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa. Although separated in their origins by three centuries, Anabaptism and Mormonism have some significant parallels which Juhnke explores.

In the decades following 1890 thousands of the children of Mennonites who had arrived in Kansas in the 1870s migrated again. This second migration is not well documented as the Mennonites usually did not stay together but dispersed into small communities across the western United States. Viola Bergman Hettinger, a freelance writer from Littleton, Colorado, provides a glimpse of one small group's obscure trek to a nearly forgotten community of Gibson, Colorado. We would like to thank the *San Luis Valley Historian* for permission to republish this article from Vol. XVII, No. 1 (1985).

The March 1986 issue will feature the five-year index and a summary of the results of a survey sent to about half of the *Mennonite Life* subscribers to obtain their evaluation of the contents and format of the publication. We would like to thank those of you who have already completed and returned your questionnaire.

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MENNONITE LIFE

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**Front Cover**
Edgar J. Banks in native dress, 1903-04

**Back Cover**
Heinrich Franz, *Choralbuch* (1860) p. 30.

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# Harmony Amid Disharmony: A Diary Portrait of Mennonite Singing in Russia During the 1860s

**Edited and translated by John B. Toews**

Russian Mennonites have not always sung in harmony nor have choirs been a long standing tradition in their worship services.[1] The dislocation generated by many decades of migration and by the rigors of frontier life did not mean an absence of hymnals or singing but perhaps did contribute to the publication of a Prussian hymnal (1767) without music notation. Its traditional melodies, now handed down by oral tradition, were invariably altered by local innovation or memory lapse. The initial migration from Prussia to Russia included few intellectuals. Perhaps they sensed there was no niche for them in the new frontier. The resulting cultural impoverishment spared neither the intellect nor the voice. The early Russian Mennonite educator Heinrich Heese complained bitterly about the "disharmony"[2] characterizing the congregational singing of his day. The lack of notation in the Prussian hymnal apparently placed no limits on the creativity of the congregational *Vorsaenger* (song leaders). Over one or two generations a hymn tune might well become unrecognizable.

The Russian Mennonite teacher, Heinrich Franz, launched what eventually became a major reform when he compiled a *Choralbuch* in 1837. His aim as he explained in his introduction was "to do my little bit to better the singing, initially in my school and through it in the worship services." The hymnal was used by the schools in manuscript form until its 1860 publication in Germany. Its melodies were notated in *Ziffern* (ciphers), hence the references to *Zifferngesang* (cipher singing) or *Zifferndmelodien* (cipher melodies). The old style of singing, transmitted by oral tradition, was known as *Gehoergesang* (singing by ear).

Franz's innovation occurred in the context of a self-contained inward-looking society, more concerned with what was and had been, rather than what could be. A generation which had sung solely by ear and become quite accustomed to disharmony and melody embellishment naturally found the new music strange. The transition from one style to another was a protracted one. Except for isolated references in later memoirs, few eye witness accounts of the process have survived. One fortunate exception exists: the diary of Jacob Epp (1860-1880) in the archival holdings of the Mennonite Heritage Center, Winnipeg, Manitoba. It provides a rare opportunity to enter the day to day world of village life in the 1860s and 1870s. Epp lived in the so-called "Hebrew Colonies" in the Kherson District. Mennonites from the Chortitza Colony were relocated in newly founded Jewish settlements to serve as model farmers for their less experienced neighbours. Each village was assigned a given number of Mennonite families who, while religiously and culturally separate, were tied into local agrarian and economic patterns. Epp was elected as a *Lehrer* (teacher-minister) in the Hebrew Colonies. This not only made him a local worship leader and preacher, but also a participant in the local *Lehrdienst,* a ministerial council whose jurisdiction encompassed virtually all aspects of community life except grievous assault or murder. As a church leader he confronted every community issue including, as he expressed it, *Zahlengesang* (number singing).

To my knowledge no other surviving document of the period provides such a firsthand insight into the length of the transition from one style to another and the internal tensions associated with it. Though the translated diary excerpts are generally self-explanatory, two things appear especially significant: the role of *Zahlengesang* in the schools and the reference to the "ringing voices" (March 20, 1866) of the children during the village worship service. Eventually most children learned to sing chorales in school and not only helped their parents to master the art, but became the carriers of the new tradition when they grew up.

In the translation the names of the villages in the Hebrew Colonies are spelled as they appear in the diary. Two additional terms need clarification. *Ohm* was a term applied to any elected minister but could also be used as a term of respect for an older gentleman. *Bruederschaft* referred to an assembly of all adult males having membership in the local church. Its decision, following open discussion and debate, was considered final.

*Heinrich Franz.*

**January 8, 1860**

I received a letter from my fellow worker, Isaac Klassen, in which he complains that the public worship in Nowoshitomir on the feast of Epiphany was disturbed by *Zahlengesang*. The letter carrier, the wife of Peter Banmann who lives here, had been there at the time with her husband and said that: "the service was disturbed during the sermon by the laughter of several girls, the loudest of whom was the daughter of *Ohm* Isaac." God have mercy on us!

**January 9, 1860**

In the evening we had the schoolteacher Heinrich Olfert from Nowoshitomir and Abraham Guenther and their wives as guests. Olfert, who is a *Vorsaenger* and had sung the song in the service at Nowoshitomir according to a *Zahlenmelodie,* complained that *Ohm* Isaac Klassen compared such singing to a pub song and made all sorts of inappropriate comments about it. Klassen himself had created the disturbance in that he had got up during the singing in order to pronounce the benediction. Two persons immediately left the service, namely his brother Franz Klassen and Peter Neufeld. The congregation nevertheless sang all of the three announced verses and remained seated until [the song] was completed so no real disturbance occurred. Olfert justified his action by saying that he knew no other melody for the song. If he had done wrong or sinned, something should be done about the singing in the schools.

**January 10, 1860**

In the evening we, my wife and I, were at Peter von Kampen. Peter Loewen and his wife from Nowoshitomir were also there. *Ohm* Peter does not agree with *Ohm* Isaac on the matter and found the [worship] disturbance more due to the behavior of the latter than in the singing.

**January 18, 1860**

After breakfast our guests walked to Wilhelm Martens where they had left their wagon and from where they wanted to leave for home in the afternoon. Mr. I. Klassen was very unhappy about the *Zahlengesang* which he likened to the activities of the Anti-Christ during the last days. His brother Franz Klassen had told him it [the singing] was military in character. I presented informed arguments against this. Among other things he told me of drinking-bouts among the Germans in which his sons-in-law drank too much brandy, that his brother Franz had to provide the brandy [as a payment] for straw etc. I objected strenuously by pointing out that a melody sung according to *Ziffern* to the honor of God during worship created such an uproar while a large-scale booze binge was dismissed with a few [lame] excuses. When he left Klassen insisted that the *Vorsaenger* receive a directive on the issue [of *Zifferngesang*]. I replied that he and Loewen should have done this immediately instead of intensifying the discontent with their antics. When I came [to conduct] the worship service again we would talk about this matter as well as the drinking-bout. He did not want this and came up with all kinds of excuses.

**January 30, 1860**

I finished my business with the district mayor [in Chortitza] as well as the storekeeper Dyck. For lunch I was at my brother-in-law Jacob Petkau and in the afternoon drove with him to elder Gerhard Dyck. I discussed the issue the *Zahlengesang* with the elder. He was already acquainted with the behavior of my co-worker and refused to tolerate it in the least.

**February 8, 1860**

In the morning I went to *Ohm* Isaac. They, namely he and his wife, chided me for not coming yesterday evening but I pointed out that we had agreed on this arrangement. They soon began talking about the *Zahlengesang* and I told them what the elder had said. Namely it was nothing new but something old, which the notes in the very old songbooks proved. In this way I tried to put the issue to rest. They, however, talked themselves into such a feverish pitch that their faces reddened and their facial features became twisted . . . . Afternoon we visited the two schools in Islutchistaja and Kamjanke . . . . The singing was by ear (*Gehoergesang*) and *Ohm* Isaac said it was better than *Zahlengesang.* When I asked the children to sing alone they could not do so . . . . When we left the school Klassen mockingly said that he did not want to continue [the school inspection], he had no interest in singing according to numbers and did not understand the confused teaching [emanating] from Nowopodolsk.

**February 9, 1860**

After we had waited for Klassen until 9.00 hours I and Loewen went to our local school [Nowowitebsk] . . . . For lunch I and my wife and Loewen drove to Nowopodolsk to Diedrich Epp. [Epp] who is the local administrator, walked to school with us in the afternoon. Here Mr. Isaac Klassen joined us again. He gave an evasive answer when I asked him why he had not come to Nowowitebsk . . . . [During the inspection] songs from our hymnal were intermittently sung. At the end several chorales were sung in part-singing. The singing was rather good. If only we had schools like this everywhere!

**February 11, 1863**

Monday morning we, that is I and my three co-workers, were in the school of Nowowitebsk. The schoolteacher is my neighbour Heinrich Olfert who holds school in his house. The subjects of instruction: Bible Stories (Old Testament): reading; writing; arithmetic; singing by *Ziffern* . . . . Afternoon we were in Nowopodolsk. The schoolteacher was Franz Nickel, a teacher from the *Central Schule.* Subjects of instruction Bible Stories; reading; writing; mental and black board arithmetic; grammar and spelling; geography; *Zifferngesang.*

**Februray 10, 1865**

. . . We drove . . . to Nowokowna. The school is in the home of Michael Hamm . . . . Here everything was only in the beginning stages . . . . The *Zifferngesang* was still very inadequate.

**March 20, 1866**

This was the first time this year that we held the worship service in our church. I had this announced in the village yesterday and most of the locals, especially the children, attended. It was probably at the instigation of the schoolteacher Olfert that a *Zahlenmelodie* was sung at the conclusion of the service. The children joined in with ringing voices. We began with the fifth verse of song number 62. This was the first *Ziffernmelodie* ever sung in this church. During the winter it occurred a number of times in the house services in Nowowitebsk. In the Chortitza church it has been in use since fall.

**February 7, 1868**

There was only one school with which I was satisfied, namely Kamjanka. There we found excellent instruction in Bible Stories. The school

also demonstrated excellence in arithmetic. Almost everywhere the singing is good. Only in Islutschistaja there is still singing by ear (*Gehoersingen*).

**April 7, 1868**

At the end of the sermon song number 108 was sung according to *Ziffern.* During the second verse Jacob de Veer walked out and waited in the cloakroom until it was finished. That is how varied the views about the singing are. May unity in this matter soon return to our churches.

**April 21, 1868**

Today there was a disturbing incident related to *Zifferngesang*. The morning song (opening song) was sung by ear (*Gehoermelodie*) and the closing song according to *Ziffern.* de Veer from Islutschistaja again rushed out in anger and drove home without taking his daughter. Peter Peters slammed the church door so hard [when he left] that it sprang open again.

**April 24, 1868**

Before evening Jacob de Veer from Islutschistaja came to me. He sat for a long time, and we talked about a number of things until he came to the purpose of his visit. He said that *Zahlengesang* was repugnant to him and that he could not attend such meetings, etc. I asked him to prove from God's Word that such singing was sinful, then we could forbid it. That he could not do. I'm not happy that it creates such offense. I spoke about this to elder Jacob Dyck . . . years ago and told him it was best to remove *Zifferngesang* from the schools otherwise we would eventually sing this way in the church. He told me this could not be done and now I told de Veer the same thing. He asked whether we would still accept his daughter [in the congregation] if he could not come to peace [with the issue]. I gave my assurance provided the church agreed.

**April 28, 1868**

*Bruederschaft* . . . . Veer and Peters were not there which generated consternation. They unanimously demanded that these disturbers of the peace be brought to account. I wanted to wait until the elder came. They reluctantly agreed. Some even wanted to exclude the children if their fathers did not appear next Sunday. I replied that the children who tearfully pleaded with their fathers were not at fault and therefore should not be excluded.

**December 31, 1868**

The past year has brought great changes in my everyday life . . . . I have lived in Nowowitebsk for 16 years and experienced many a sorrow . . . . In the congregation the *Zahlengesang* has caused unrest in some members. Grant O God a new spirit for the new year—and new life in the congregation. Amen.

**January 12, 1869**

Reliable sources told me that *Ohm* Isaac Klassen in Nowoshitomir sent a long, long letter to our elder in which he attacked me severely. In the main he demanded that the congregation remove me and my fellowworker Petkau from our posts . . . . The *Zifferngesang* [question] has won a few friends for him.

**January 26, 1869**

. . . *Ohm* Isaac Klassen, who consistently opposes the *Zahlengesang* . . .

**February 9, 1869**

In the worship service at Nowokowna both the opening song and closing song after the sermon were sung according to *Ziffern*! This is the first time that this has happened in Nowokowna. During last summer some still stayed away from the church on account of this singing, so this came as a surprise to me.

**December 31, 1869**

The uproar about *Zahlensingen* or *Ziffernmelodien* has died down, though in Kamjanka and Islutschistaja they still sing according to *Gehoermelodien.*

**February 8, 1870**

Afternoon the funeral of my little departed grandson Jacob Andres was held in the home of Gerhard Andres. *Ziffernmelodien* were sung, for the first time in this locality. It was good singing, full-toned and beautiful. When we came there was no *Vorsaenger* in the service, so I asked Jacob de Veer to begin the opening song (*Morgenlied*) which he did. He immediately suspected that they would sing the *Ziffernmelodien* so while the funeral guests were taking their places he walked about in the vestibule with his cap on his head and his steaming tobacco pipe in his mouth. When the singing began he made quick tracks for home. His wife stayed until the coffee, then suddenly was gone as well.

**February 9, 1870**

On Monday there was a short post-funeral (*Nachbegraebnis*) where a song "Alles eilt zur Ewigkeit" was sung according to the *Ziffernmelodie.*

**February 11, 1870**

Afternoon we drove to Kamjanka to the mayor, Jacob Hamm. Together with him and others we went to the school. The teacher is Gerhard Redekopp . . . He explained that he did not want to sing because of the dispute about singing. We encouraged him to sing with the children, with *Ziffernmelodien* if necessary.

**March 8, 1870**

On Sunday morning the earth was thinly covered with snow. I and my son David drove by sleigh to Islutschistaja for the service . . . . This time the singing was bad. The *Vorsaenger* are withdrawing because they wish to have the *Zifferngesang* introduced. A few verses were sung according to ear before and after the sermon. I hope there will soon be unity in the congregation with regard to the singing. The majority are already of one opinion and do not regard *Zifferngesang* as a great evil.

**March 16, 1870**

In the evening various lovely songs, Christian ones, were sung by the young people until 23.00 hours. Give your blessing Oh Jesus!

**April 5, 1870**

The children who came from Islutschistaja said that they had sung *Ziffernmelodien* during the worship service, whereupon the Peter Peters couple left the service as well as the wife of Heinrich Siemens.

**August 24, 1870**

This morning at 8.00 hours we began our return trip [from Chortitza] . . . . In Burwalde the dear elder together with several co-workers had just settled a major dispute emanating from the introduction of *Zifferngesang.* The new *Vorsaenger* had withdrawn because several members were unhappy with this singing and now the bickering and squabbling had no end. The teacher, *Ohm* Isaac de Veer, was seen as the instigator of this fateful event, but I did not ask the elder in how far he was at fault. The *Zifferngesang* was again affirmed. Many consider this innovation as contrary to the Christian faith.

**December 31, 1870**

The *Zahlengesang* which formerly

caused such an uproar is now accepted everywhere and the wrangling and quarreling is at an end. There are still two church members in the Islutschistaja colony who refuse to attend the services on this account.

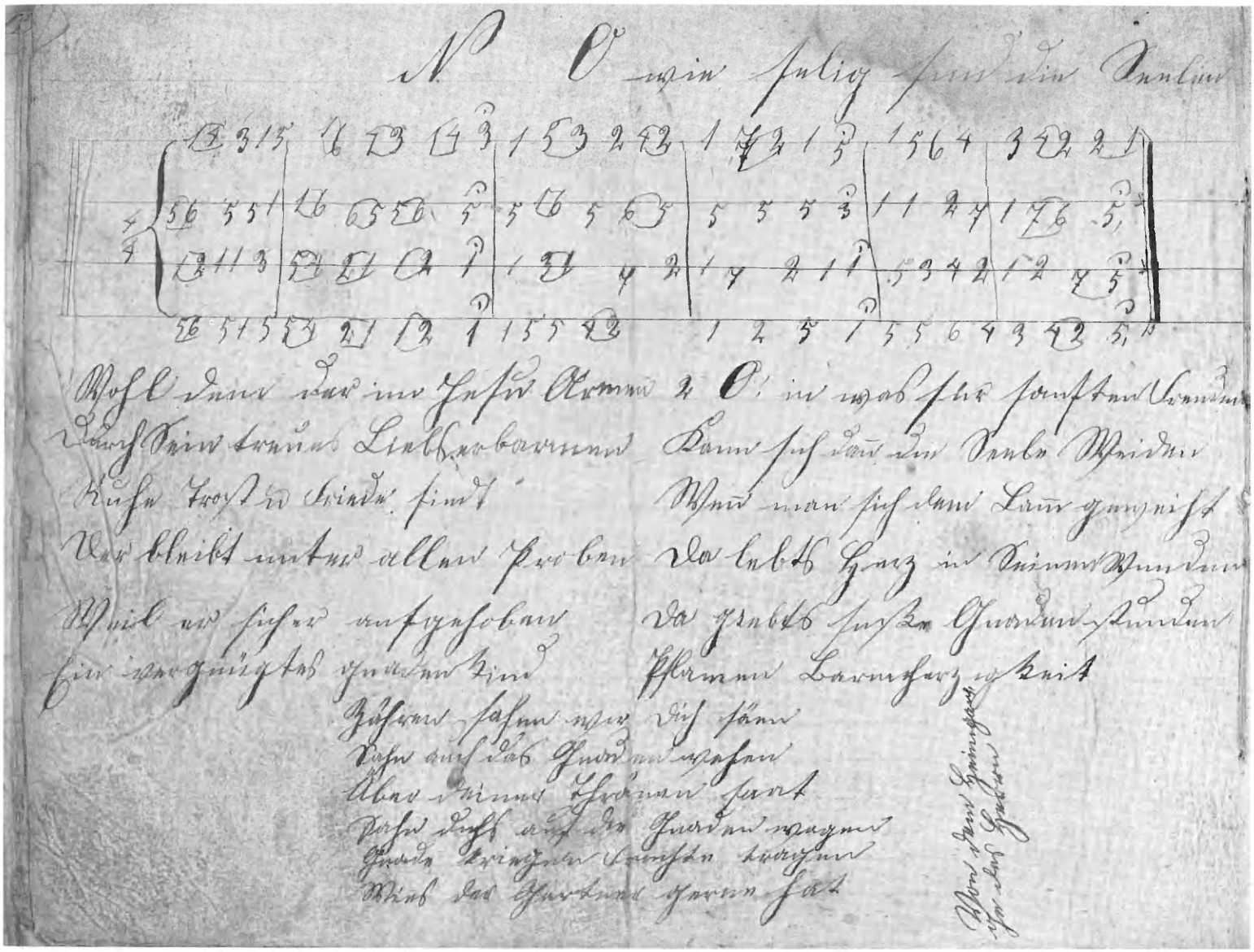
**March 7, 1871**

The fuss which the introduction of *Ziffernmelodien* caused is gradually waning. Peters has not attended a public worship service since April 21, 1868. He had made it a rule that if he were to attend, the singing must be by ear. Now his defiance and opposition is at an end. This morning he was at the service with his bride. *Ziffernmelodien* were sung at the morning as well as the afternoon service. I observed that he sang along. Now there is only Jacob de Veer from Islutschistaja who persists in his obstinacy.

ENDNOTES

[1]A good account of the subject can be found in Wesley Berg, "The Development of Choral Singing Among the Mennonites of Russia to 1895," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. LV (1981), 131-142.

[2]P. M. Friesen, *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruederschaft in Russland, 1789-1910* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1911), 92.



*A page from a song book using* Ziffern. *This book is dated 1850 and was Anna Unruh Schmidt's. Ten of the twenty-two songs in the book are in the 1860* Choralbuch. *Reproduced below from Schmidt's song book and on the back cover from the 1860* Choralbuch *is 'O wie selig sind die Seelin.'' (MLA-SA-II-177)*

# The North Newton WILPF: Educating for Peace

**by Kimberly Schmidt**

### The Beginnings

Teas, teas and more teas! Eva Harshbarger and a small group of women were always busy in June when the Kansas Institute of International Relations (KIIR) was held on the Bethel College campus. The Institute consisted of a ten day program which was sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Speakers who had been hired by the AFSC came to lecture. People who attended the Institute could enroll as a student would for a class, and Bethel students were allowed credit for attending. "Behind the Institute was the idea that, if you can't take the people to the world, bring the world to the people."[1]

It was an exciting opportunity for ministers, professors and Mennonites in the area to hear people from a variety of backgrounds affirm the pacifist stance. The sessions, however, were long and strenuous all-day affairs and Eva Harshbarger, wife of E. L. Harshbarger, director of the Institute and a Bethel College professor,[2] soon saw the need for refreshing breaks or teas during the day. She thus began to claim a reputation as a "Hostess in the Cause for Peace."[3]

The teas which she and other women in the community organized were important because they served two functions. The most obvious function (one that any social setting provides) was that of bringing people together. KIIR participants were afforded the chance to relax and meet the speakers and like-minded people from around the state in a less formal setting. Many friendships, some crossing international boundaries, were formed during these teas.

Harshbarger fondly recalls the time when in 1939 Dr. Benes, the recently exiled president of Czechoslovakia, came to speak at Bethel. She organized a tea for him which became a statewide event as over 500 people came to meet him.

The second important function of the teas was to bring together the women in the community who felt a need to educate themselves and organize around international and domestic political events and issues.

Why did these women suddenly feel the need to start yet another peace group? After all, the Bethel College community and church already included organizations actively involved in promoting peace.

Information in the 1930's did not flow as fast as it does now. Television was unheard of, and, according to Harshbarger, many families did not own radios.[4] Their major source of information was either correspondence or newspapers which often reported events with a conservative bias. The general lack of information was disquieting to many of the women.

The women's husbands also spurred their interests. Many husbands were active in peace organizations affiliated with the college or the church. Because of their husbands' interest in politics and personal encouragement, the women decided to form their own group. As Harshbarger explained, [It was] "something the women could do. And most of us needed a great deal of education in this area."[5] Many conditions for starting a WILPF chapter were present in the 1930s. Into this scenario stepped one of the catalysts, Eleanor Eaton.

Eaton was the traveling secretary for the United States National Board of the WILPF (National). She had come to hear Muriel Lester, a key speaker for the KIIR.

Muriel Lester's personal pilgrimage and vivacity must have influenced the decision to start a WILPF chapter. Harshbarger, during a review of the chapter's early history, often referred to her.[6]

Lester believed that pacifists were bound to serve humanity. To her it was inconceivable for a pacifist to turn her back on the world. She said:

> Once your eyes have been opened to pacifism you can't shut them again. Once, you see it, you can't unsee it. You may bitterly regret the fact that you happen to be one of the tiny minority of the human race who have caught this angle of vision, but you can't help it.[7]

Lester was a moving and powerful speaker. There is no doubt she made a substantial impact on the women in the community. Harshbarger fondly recalled the tea given in Lester's honor where over 80 women attended.

*Muriel Lester.*

Eaton noticed how interested the women were in Lester and how they flocked to hear her speak. Soon after Lester's visit, Eaton asked Harshbarger if she would organize a local WIL chapter. And so it happened, with Lester's inspiration, Eaton's encouragement, and Harshbarger's early leadership, the same women who had served teas for the Institute decided to form their own group. The minutes book opens with this statement:

A small group of B.C. campus women, met at the home of Mrs. E. L. Harshbarger on Dec. 9, 1936, for the purpose of organizing a local branch of the WIL. Those present were: Mrs. E. L. Harshbarger, Mrs. B. Bargen, Miss Minnie Schmidt, Dr. Ethel Wilson, Dr. Enid Smith, Mrs. J. F. Moyer and Mrs. P. S. Goertz.[8]

Joining the WILPF was an excellent opportunity for education. Monthly newsletters would arrive from the National headquarters in Washington D.C., chronicling recent events and upcoming bills on Capitol Hill. The women could then meet and share thoughts on the information. Their monthly meetings usually ended in a letter writing session to their political representatives. In fact, for many years the main activities of the local chapter were news gathering, letter writing and teas.

### The Nature of the Early WILPF

The WILPF in the 1930's was heavily involved in a peace campaign to prevent the arms build-up to World War II. In 1937, the campaign culminated with a conference in Lahacovice, Czechoslovakia. One hundred and forty-nine women came as delegates representing nineteen countries.

The WILPF objected to the arms build-up because they felt it would only lead to war. The WILPF was instead "... dedicated to non-violent means for the resolution and management of conflict [and] the building of institutions for ... world order."[9] Then, as today, the philosophy of pacifism which the WILPF espoused was one of a new global society where people and institutions contribute to a cooperative peace.

It is easy to understand how Mennonites, with their emphasis on pacifism as a lifestyle commitment and their interest in global missions, would want to join a worldwide sisterhood devoted to peace. Another characteristic which attracted the North Newton women was the intellectual nature of the WILPF.

*Top. WILPF tea for Woodring singers from Philadelphia.*
*Middle. Outdoor WILPF tea at Goerz Hall.*
*Bottom. Another WILPF tea for the Kansas Institute of International Relations: (l-r) Emlyn Williams, unidentified, Eva Harshbarger, Mrs. Williams, E. L. Harshbarger, Vivian Musselman, and Eleanor Eaton, field secretary of WILPF.*

It is important to realize that the women who joined were not stereotypical housewives of the 1930's, content to serve tea and cookies. Two of the original eight charter members were professors, and the others had close ties with the college either because their husbands were professors or because of the small, closed nature of the North Newton community. As mentioned earlier, the women wanted to educate themselves. At that time, WILPF was the only international organization committed to pacifism, women's issues and peace education.

One frustration which the founding mothers had (and which is still a disappointment) was the inability to attract members from outside the confines of the North Newton, Mennonite community. Harshbarger has admitted, "We have some people who are members [from Newton], but it is a source of regret that we didn't seem to make more of an impression into the town [Newton] itself."[10]

The reason for this is not entirely WILPF's fault. A long standing antagonism exists between the two communities. Newton is generally more politically, intellectually, and religiously conservative than North Newton. The WILPF chapter, along with some Bethel College professors and students, has been accused in the past of both Nazism and Communism by Newton citizens.[11]

The nature of the local chapter has retained continuity throughout the years in spite of more involvement from non-Mennonite, Newton community members. It is still a group which draws many of its members from the college, and most of the women are Mennonite. While local members may regret not having a larger group to work with, it is probably the small membership and strong community ties that have sustained them over such a long period of time.

## WILPF and World War II: 1936-1945

It is somewhat surprising that the women chose such a potentially discouraging time in which to start a small group devoted to world peace. Hitler was preparing to march his armies through Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia in 1936. Japan was preparing to invade China. The world was ready for war.

But war, like any other occurrence which demands even a temporary social change, commands attention. Ideas and movements attract more public awareness and controversy when the issues are the most heated. It is possible that the reason a WILPF chapter was started in North Newton at this time was because of the arms build-up and not in spite of it. The minutes of the February 1937 meeting seem to support this. The secretary, Mrs. J. H. Doell wrote, "The people of Europe want peace even more than America. All peace minded people realize that we must take action, not just want peace."[12]

The best way the WILPF knew how to respond to the war was to write letters. Meetings were held on the proper way to write a senator or representative. The following letter is a rather humorous example of how not to write a letter.

Bethel College, Kansas
January 6, 1938

Mr. John M. Houston
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I hear you folks are going to talk about an amendment to Congress, to change conditions. It's called, I think, the Ludoo amendment or something like that. I don't know when it is going to come up before Congress but I sh (pardon my typing) sure would think it swell if you could pass it. I don't know quite what it's all about, so would you be kind enough to give me the low down on law. Maybe you could get your secretary to send me some information. Remember this is awfully important legislation, and we've all got to stick together to get it through (what did you say it was about? It slipped my mind). As always your devoted Republican, Iam

Sincerely yours,

An interesting side note in the minutes clarifies the purpose and intent of the letters the chapter sent.

All letters of protest recorded in the minutes have been written in a spirit of deep concern and not in a spirit of agitation. They have been signed personally and not as an organization.[14]

In addition to writing letters, they framed a poster of the Kellogg Briand Peace Pact and mounted it on the Newton Post Office lawn. They expected the poster to be taken down immediately because the Pact was a peace treaty enacted after World War I which condemned war. Much to their surprise the poster stood for several years.

One of the most significant ways the WIL protested the effects of war was a push to let Japanese-Americans migrate from California to Kansas. They even tried for a time to sponsor two students at Bethel College. Those plans fell through when the concentration camp internment was enforced, and Governor Ratner of Kansas closed Kansas borders against all Japanese. The chapter resorted to sending bundles to Japanese children and writing letters.

War issues were not their only concern during the war years. The branch kept a broad agenda and addressed such issues as India's independence from Britain, segregation and race relations, peace education and the question of "Stateless Jews."[15]

Meetings continued until 1943 when the group temporarily disbanded for a two year interim. The minutes note that membership was maintained by collecting the dues. There is also a record of activities sponsored and carried out by people who were members of the WILPF, although no definite action was taken in the name of the WILPF. The explanation for this was given by Harshbarger.

Early in 1941 Emmet Harshbarger succumbed to a prolonged sickness in the hospital, and he died sixteen months after having been initially admitted. When Eva was no longer able to preside at and organize meetings, the group temporarily disbanded.

## 1945 - A Short Rejuvenation

The events of 1945 were indeed interesting. Two years after her husband's death, Harshbarger was back on the scene and initiated WIL meetings by holding the first one in her home in June of that year. The minutes record a buoyant mood throughout the few months they met before disbanding for an even longer break of six years.

In June the minutes read, "we felt encouraged to go on with our WIL meetings because there was much interest and enthusiasm expressed at this first meeting."[16] Mrs. L. C. Kreider, who was elected president, chose to further hearten the women by retelling the history of Jane Addams (founder of the WILPF) and the ". . . untiring efforts of other peaceminded women to promote and foster the peace idea which gave rise to many WIL organizations in different parts of the United States."[17]

They did not formally meet again until August 9. The minutes record that a potluck supper was held and that, "all

felt it had been good to be there."[18] No mention is made of the recent atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The *New York Times* headlined the bombings on August 7, 8 and 9, and no doubt exists that the news of the devastation was heard in such far away places as North Newton.

Harshbarger attributed the seeming lack of interest to the dangers involved in expressing opposition during times of war. She said, "It is difficult for young people to understand how careful we had to be during that time. Persons who opposed war efforts were suspect . . . more than suspect. This was the time of McCarthy."[19]

The women may not have openly opposed the war, but from August through November they did meet to write letters protesting the draft and to assemble relief packages for war victims in Holland. After the November meeting, however, the women decided once again to disband.

According to Mrs. L. C. Kreider, then chairperson of the branch, interest and motivation were low. Some of the women had young children to care for and could not spare the precious time and energy needed to keep the organization stable.[20] Although the chapter officially disbanded, many maintained their membership by continuing to pay national dues.

### 1951-1959: A Fresh Start

Six years later it took an outsider to again activate the branch. This time Mrs. Gladys Walzer, a former missionary to Japan, filled the role. The February 8, 1951, minutes record the following remarks about Walzer. "Her excellent talk, enthusiasm and persistant organizing ability finally persuaded the group who remained after the talk for a meeting to reorganize the local WIL."[21] Another reason for the 1951 revival was that the "consideration of the U.M.T. [Universal Military Training] in Congress seemed a fitting time to revive the group."[22]

The minutes from the meetings in the early 1950's echo those of the late 30's and 40's. They were mostly concerned with an exchange of information, group awareness raising and letter writing. They continued to have guest speakers, usually missionaries or community people who had just been overseas. They also continued the tradition of serving teas during the KIIR until 1954 when it was relocated.

One of the more exciting memories was receiving the National WILPF Handbook with these warning words: ". . . guard the Handbook and [do] not let outsiders get a hold of its lists of names."[23] McCarthyism[24] was gaining momentum and the National Committee was taking cautionary measures to protect its members.

In 1955 meeting times that suited everyone's schedule became harder to find. Yet the group carried on. Their persistance could be due to the fact that they twice needed to plan for visiting National Board members. Both attempts at scheduling failed, and after the last one it was decided that there were too many meetings and it might be easier on everyone if the chapter disbanded. On January 17, 1959, a formal decision, as recorded by Edna M. Baehr, was made:

> I move that we dissolve as an organized branch and in the future support the National organization through our individual membership fees or contributions. This motion carried unanimously so the North Newton Branch passed out of existence.[25]

It was a rather dour note with which to end the activities of an organization. Yet they really did not "pass out of existence" as Mrs. Baehr records. Members continued to pay dues, and so on the national record books a chapter still existed in North Newton, Kansas.

### 1962-1979: Patterns of Peace

When one reviews the history of the local WIL, one definitely notices a pattern developing. In 1962 Annalee Stewart was the Muriel Lester of 1936 and the Gladys Walzer of 1951. Stewart was a representative from the National Board who came to see if she could excite the group into starting anew. The minutes open with an account of her meeting with members who had maintained their membership even when the local group was not active.

This time LaVonne Platt took responsibility as chairperson of the local group. She was aware that the major reason for previous disbanding of the branch was because of scheduling hassles. Many of the women in WILPF were involved in numerous other peace activities. To avoid complaints about the number of meetings and to ensure longevity Platt adopted a new meeting format. She decided to replace monthly meetings with newsletters. In addition, she encouraged ". . . small letter writing coffees, plus programs when helpful . . . to promote individual and group action . . ."[26] Platt also added a new objective for the group, that of non-duplication. She said, "We really tried to pick up on those things that were not being handled by other groups."[27]

The chapter was soon re-activated and monthly newsletters prepared by chapter officers served to keep members informed about world events in the same way speakers had in the past.

In the '60's and '70's the group began to sponsor more community involved projects and programs. Indeed such a proliferation of interests and activities ensued that it would be impossible to account for them all. The variety is, however, worth mentioning. Some interests were as follows:

Chemical and Biological Warfare
Fair Housing Concerns
Civil Liberties
Sponsoring of Peace Movies
Nuclear Weapons
SALT Treaties
Peace Education
Military Spending
The Draft
Vietnam War
Childhood Education
War Toys
China Policy ([28])

A few major activities that reflect the WILPF's broad interests will be highlighted below.

### 1965: Speakers for Peace

Mildred Scott Olmstead, the executive director of the WILPF, came to Bethel to speak. Her visit was sponsored by the local WILPF. Olmstead, an associate of Jane Addams, served on many international peace committees. Her activities often took her abroad for international conferences. Her sharing brought a certain type of executiveness that had not been experienced since Muriel Lester. It was very exciting for the women in WILPF to have such a well known speaker come to Bethel.

Dr. Carol Andreas, a sociologist from the University of Michigan, was another speaker WILPF sponsored. Her topic was war toys and how they affect children. Andreas noted, "The war toys we buy for our children teach them the American heritage of violence."[29] Evidently she made quite an impact,

since the next three newsletters carried suggestions on how to stop manufacturers from producing war toys.

These were two different speakers, both concerned with international peace but taking completely different approaches. Olmstead worked with international committees and organizations, while Andreas worked with how peace starts at home. Both were asked to come to Newton and address the concerns of the women there.

### 1967: The Chopping Block

In November of 1967 as part of American Heritage Week the Newton office of the American Legion asked civic organizations in Newton to sponsor an "I am Proud to Be an American" week. The Newton WILPF decided that in keeping with the week's motif a debate exercising America's freedom of speech would be appropriate. In the tradition of the American Town Meeting the Newton branch proposed that a "discussion of the pro's and con's of our nation's present policy in Vietnam be held."[30]

The executive committee wrote a letter to the American Legion offices and after receiving no reply LaVonne Platt telephoned the Planning Committee headquarters and explained WILPF's proposal to the vice-commander of the Planning Committee. Platt received a favorable response from the vice-commander and was encouraged to go ahead and schedule speakers. Unfortunately, not all committee members shared the vice-commander's sentiments.

Two days after the telephone conversation, Platt noted that, "Details for 'I Am Proud to Be an American' week were published in the local newspaper, [*The Kansan*] including a statement that, 'We have approached this with a positive attitude stressing our pride in our own United States, ignoring criticisms and any controversial issues."[31]

On November 5 after coming back from an area WILPF meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, Platt discovered that Anna Juhnke, the vice chairperson for the local branch, had made contact with the vice-commander. Juhnke had called to tell the vice-commander that the WILPF had scheduled speakers for the debate, and they would be pleased if the Planning Committee would list the debate on their Calendar of Events as previously planned.

In response the vice-commander replied that they would not endorse the debate and asked Platt and Juhnke to cancel their plans. She also denied having talked with Platt earlier. At this point Platt recalled, "I was very much distressed to learn that the telephone understanding which I had with the vice-commander of the week's Planning Committee had been denied by her."[32] The women decided to go ahead with plans to have the debate. The announcement in the newspaper was placed right beside the other activities of the day as announced by the Legion.

The debate between Colonel Thomas Badger, a retired Air Force commander and political science teacher, and Dr. William Boyer, Chair of the Political Science Department at Kansas State University, was held in Saint Mary's Catholic Church with 200 people in attendance. Platt, in her report of the debate added a humorous touch by recounting the words of Colonel Badger who said, "Peace is what I'm for. I've spent my whole life working for peace."[33] Platt noted that Colonel Badger had just ". . . recently retired from a 30-year army career."[34] Platt concluded her statement on the week's events by saying:

> We have decided that the Newton "I'm Proud to Be an American" Week Planning Committee defines Controversial as any viewpoint at variance with their viewpoint, and equates pride in one's country with loud and colorful emotional outbursts to honor the military.[35]

### 1970's: Widening Horizons

On April 2, 1970 (the anniversary of Hans Christian Anderson's birthday), the local chapter sponsored a Children's Book Festival. A pamphlet describing the fair reads as follows:

> The fair consisted of 15 different displays featuring children's and young people's books designed to promote understanding among different nation's ethnic groups.[36]

The fair displayed a wide range of topics. Some of the categories were Foreign Picture Books, Festivals and the United Nations, Jane Addams Book Awards, Ways We Worship, and Migrants and U.S. Ethnic or Religious Groups. Seventy-four books from various categories and countries were represented. Films and a traveling children's art show for the Smithsonian Institute were additional activities. In addition, a book list recommending over 300 books was provided. The fair was aptly entitled *Widening Horizons.*

Blanche Spaulding was the general chairperson. Spaulding, with her vast knowledge of children's books, possessed the motivation to undertake such an ambitious project. She said, "My idea was to have children expand their horizons through becoming acquainted with books about other lands or written by people in other countries."[37] To give the fair an intercultural atmosphere, the women dressed in native costumes and served ethnic foods.

The fair was held on the Bethel College Campus. Spaulding recalled the immensity of the project. School children from surrounding county schools were invited for the Friday afternoon activities. The fair lasted for two days and in addition to the above attractions, a program featuring folk songs and a dramatization of folk tales was provided.

The WILPF sponsored a similar Book Fair with the Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church. This time Spaulding concentrated on four areas of the world. These were the Orient, India, Russia and the Spanish-Mexican cultures of South America.

The central idea behind this fair was to reach the Mexican-American community which is the largest ethnic minority in Newton. They deliberately chose the Catholic church with the most Mexican-American parishioners as the site for the fair.

Spaulding was not sure anyone would come. However, by the time the doors opened at 7:00 p.m. her fears were put to rest. Over 300 people crowded into the church by 7:30. Spaulding remembered, "They were just as excited as they could be about this and they wanted to do everything."[38] As far as Spaulding is concerned, this fair was ". . . one of the most exciting, one of the most rewarding things we (WILPF) did."[39]

Another activity WILPF planned for children was bringing to town a traveling art show. "Art for World Friendship" was an exhibit of drawings made by children from around the world. After the children viewed the exhibit, they were asked to draw a picture of their own. These were then collected and sent to the National WILPF who produced the show.

In addition to the above projects, many women with children kept tabs on

literature given to the children while in school. *My Weekly Reader* was one such children's magazine that was carefully read because of its extremely patriotic view. The National WILPF had also targetted *My Weekly Reader* in an effort to dilute flamboyant nationalism in children's literature.

The activities of the early '70's were geared, for the most part, toward children and peace education. Spaulding commented, "I feel looking back we were a very active group in the area of Peace Education for children."[40] Peace education for peace activists is always a refreshing change from protesting for peace because it is a nurturing experience. As Spaulding said, ". . . [It's] a postive thing; you're not working against something but for something."[41]

This light, positive approach best characterizes the early '70's. New members with an interest in children were taking leadership roles in the chapter. It is interesting to note that this approach was implemented just when the Vietnam War protest was escalating. The heightened awareness of the causes of war seemed not to have affected this group as it did society at large. Consistency has always been a key part of WILPF's ideology. It, therefore, seems fitting that WILPF members should choose a positive approach to peacemaking just when attitudes towards war and peace were at their cynical worst.

### The Eighties

From the 1970's and on into the 1980's membership kept growing until at present there are approximately 60 members listed, with close to 30 actively participating. The nature of the group is a bit enigmatic. While they have maintained the informational flow and letter writing with many life long charter members involved, they have also become more varied in their programs as the activities of the 1960's and 1970's testify.

Films, speakers, peace conferences and fairs have been sponsored in recent years. The women have also combined efforts with other peace groups in the area to send books to the Freedom Schools in the South and to work on behalf of the Nuclear Freeze Campaign. During this time, a public forum targetting the Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Plant was held. The forum was favorably received with no confrontations similar to the American Heritage Week episode.

### Conclusion

From 1915 when the WILPF was founded until the early 1980's, the International body has grown from a handful of women mostly in the United States and Europe to over 50,000 members in 29 countries. Topping the WILPF's agenda is the redefinition of "security" for women, especially its application to the nuclear arms-race.

The WILPF opposes trusting the nuclear arms build-up to provide security. They insist security is heightened when open communication between the super-powers is exercised and when priority is given to the poor and marginalized in the world.

While the local chapter continues to support efforts of the WILPF, they have seldom been in the forefront of public outcry. Their beginning, serving teas, connotes the belief that quiet, simple tasks can also further the cause of peace. To prevent misunderstandings it is important to note that the group was definitely not 'Die Stillen Im Lande.' They had opinions and made them known, but through peace education not public protest. They persist in their cause because, as Platt noted in a letter, ". . . our group does not gear itself to benefits, sales, etc., as much as to educational efforts which we feel speak to the issues . . . and relate personally to concerns of peace and reconciliation."[42]

By using education as a tool for peacemaking, engaging in and sponsoring a variety of peace promoting activities, and making a long-term commitment to peace, the North Newton chapter has not only affirmed the aims and ideals of the WILPF, but also of their Mennonite faith. The chapter is a clear example of the unique contribution women united can make for peace.

ENDNOTES

[1]Mark Unruh, "E. L. Harshbarger: Mennonite Activist," (Unpublished paper, Bethel College, 1982), p. 23. For more information about the Institute see also: Theodore Loewen, "Mennonite Pacifism: The Kansas Institute of International Relations" (Unpublished paper, Bethel College, 1971).

[2]E. L. (Emmet) Harshbarger was responsible for bringing the KIIR to Bethel College. Because of Harshbarger's persistance many speakers with worldwide reputations were brought to the college.

[3]LaVonne Platt, "Hostess in the Cause for Peace," in *Full Circle: Stories of Mennonite Women*, ed. Mary Lou Cummins (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1978), p. 98.

[4]Interview with Eva Harshbarger, North Newton, Kansas, 10 January 1984.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Richard L. Deats, "No Moratorium on the Sermon on the Mount," *Fellowship of Reconciliation* 41 (July/-August 1975): 15.

[8]Minutes Book 1936-1959, WILPF Collection, Mennonite Library and Archives, Box 1, Folder 3, p. 1.

[9]Lucy P. Carner, *From Vision to Reality* (Philadelphia: WILPF, 1965), p. 20.

[10]Harshbarger Interview.

[11]Interview with Eva Harshbarger, North Newton, Kansas, 31 July 1985.

[12]Minutes Book 1936-1959, p. 4.

[13]Ibid., Insert to Minutes Book, written by Robert Kreider.

[14]Ibid., p. 11.

[15]Ibid., p. 10.

[16]Ibid., p. 13.

[17]Ibid., p. 14.

[18]Ibid., p. 14.

[19]Harshbarger Interview, 31 July 1985.

[20]Interview with Rachel Kreider, 30 July 1985.

[21]Minutes Book, p. 19.

[22]Ibid., p. 19.

[23]Ibid., p. 26.

[24]McCarthyism, named for Senator Joseph McCarthy, was an attack on supposed Communist sympathizers. His influence lasted until 1954 when the Senate censored him with a vote of condemnation.

[25]Minutes Book, p. 60.

[26]Correspondence and Reports 1962, WILPF Collection, Box 1, Folder 7½.

[27]Minutes Book, 1962-1969, Box 1, Folder 5.

[28]Appendix A, WILPF Collection, Folders 2,3,5,8 and 12.

[29]Minutes Book, 1962-69.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Children's Book Festival 1970, WILPF Collection, Box 2, Folder 10.

[37]Interview with Blanche and Lloyd Spaulding, North Newton, Kansas, 12 January 1984.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Correspondence and Reports, Box 1, Folder 11. Information in a letter from LaVonne Platt to Carol Clifford, WILPF Legislative Office, June 25, 1975.

*Eva (Geiger) Harshbarger.*

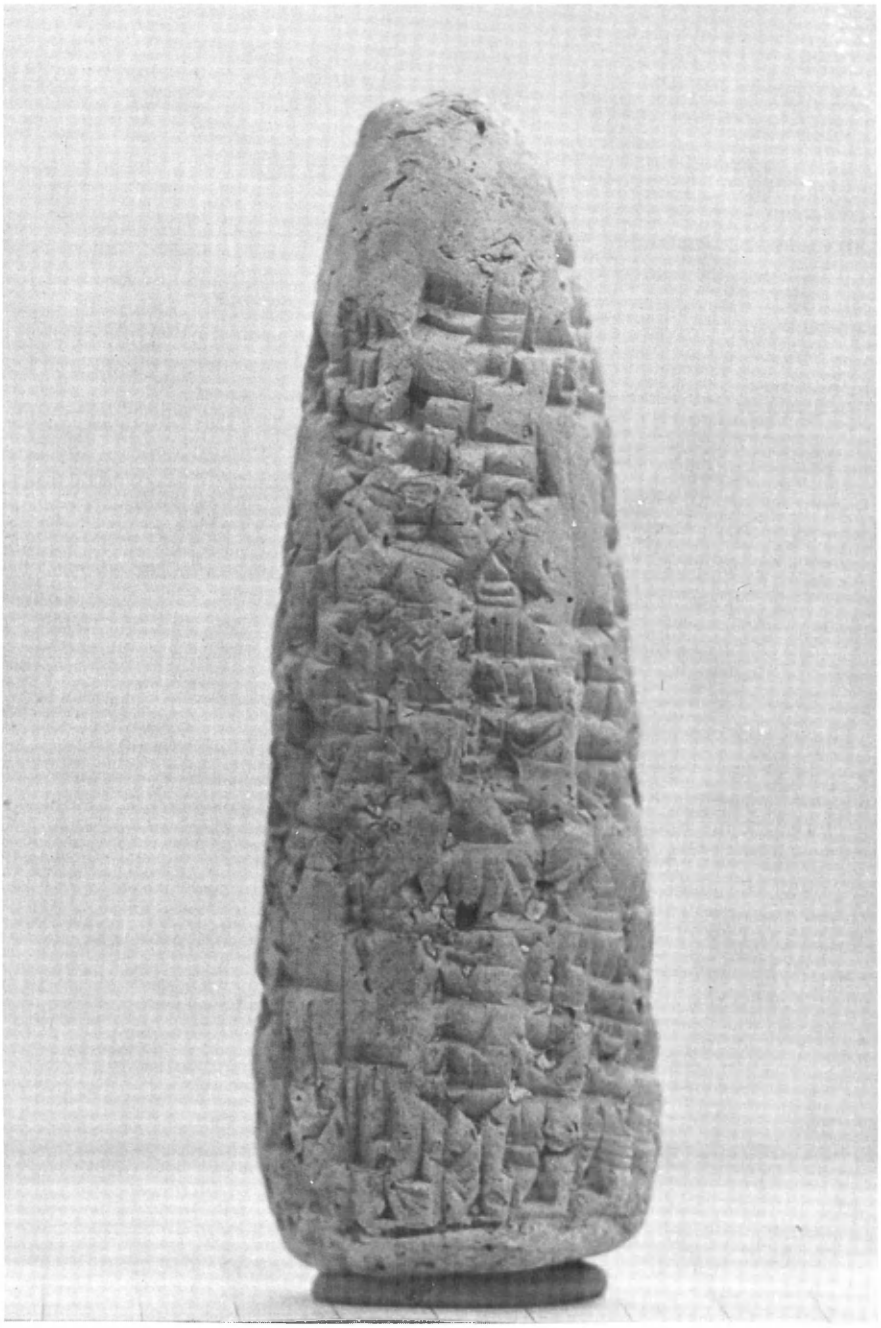
# The Mesopotamian Connection: The Bethel Cuneiform Tablets and Their Journey to Kansas

**by Keith L. Sprunger**

The oldest "books" at Bethel College—in fact, perhaps its oldest man-made objects of any kind—are several clay cuneiform tablets in Kauffman Museum. These writings could tell the story of ancient people living over 4,000 years ago, well before the time of Hammurabi and Moses. Although at Bethel College for over thirty years, however, their fascinating story has been only partly revealed.

The Bethel cuneiform tablets came from the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, "the land between the rivers." Mesopotamia is the Fertile Crescent area of the Middle East, today encompassing the modern nations of Iraq and Syria and their famous Tigris and Euphrates rivers. For millennia, empires arose and fell in Mesopotamia: Sumer, Akkad, Assyria, Babylonia, the Medes and Persians, Alexander the Great, and the Romans. The written records of these thriving civilizations were kept on clay tablets. The people of ancient Mesopotamia did not have books made from paper. They used wet slabs of clay, sometimes as small as 1½ or 2 inches square, and pressed wedge-shaped characters into the clay with the blunt end of a reed or stylus. These wedge shapes gave the language its name of "cuneiform." If the tablet was to be preserved for a long time, it would be fire-hardened and kept in a storage room with other tablets. Archeologists excavating the ancient Mesopotamian cities in Syria and Iraq have unearthed library rooms filled with the cuneiform records of business transactions, legal agreements, royal correspondence, and literary documents.

Bethel's cuneiform collection is composed of three tablets and one cone, dating from various periods and areas of Mesopotamia. Two of the tablets come from the period known as Ur III



*Terra cotta cone, c. 2060 B.C. (no. 6514.1).*

(ca. 2100-2000 B.C.). This was a time of extensive trade relations among the nations of the Near East, and also of the development of strong political governments. The well-preserved terra cotta cone, a cylinder-shaped text, contains a bragging inscription from king Lipit-Ishtar of Ur, presenting himself as the guardian of the people's rights and the devout servant of the gods (no. 6514.1). The other Ur text appears to be a legal contract with the names of witnesses inscribed below the terms of the agreement (no. 6514.2).

A third tablet, the smallest, measuring about 1½ by 1½ inches (no. 6514.4), is a "messenger text" from the Sumerian city of Umma (ca. 2300 B.C.) The messenger text or tablet was carried by a travelling messenger and it served the dual purpose of a sort of "meal ticket" or ration check for the messenger when he arrived with his message and also a credential of his services as a messenger. This Umma messenger text is badly worn and appears to have been in a fire. This is quite likely since most of the cities of ancient Mesopotamia were destroyed repeatedly by hostile armies. The text has been written on both sides and on the edge, showing an economy of materials seldom seen today.

The fourth tablet is the best preserved and the most recent (no. 6514.3). It dates from the Assyrian period of about 650 B.C., and it is an economic text. It describes a business transaction involving certain amounts of grain. Each transaction is recorded and then the total is given at the end. This type of cuneiform is the most common type of text to be found in the Near East.

These tablets and cone, although only a small collection, provide several windows into the lives of ancient people and institutions. They reveal political, economic, and social information. The terra cotta cone, for example, shows political propaganda, a topic very familiar to us today, from the king of Ur (ca. 2060 B.C.). Such cones were built into the temple walls like a modern corner stone. The inscription reads:

The divine Lipit-Ishtar,
the humble shepherd of Nippur,
the faithful husbandman of Ur,
who does not change the face of Eridu,
a king befitting Erech,
the king of Isin,
the king of Sumer and Akkad (North and South Babylonia),
who captivated the heart of the goddess Ininni (Ishtar),

*Above. Cuneiform tablets. Messenger text, c. 2300 B.C. (no. 6514.4), upper left. Economic text of grain transactions, c. 650 B.C. (no. 6514.3), lower left. Legal document with names of witnesses, c. 2100-2000 B.C. (no. 6514.2), right.*

*Right. Household goddess, before 1000 B.C., found at Warka (no. 6514.5).*

am I.
When justice in Sumer and Akkad he had established,
the temple of justice he built.[1]

The power-hungry ruler intended these braggadocious inscriptions to tell future generations about his great accomplishment. His purpose, apparently, has been accomplished since he is now renowned from Mesopotamia to Kansas.

The other three cuneiforms are records of economic life. Just as today, "paper work" was an important part of the citizen's life. Contracts, receipts, and buying and selling reveal a very advanced economic civilization. Thousands of economic tablets survive, containing the records of tax collectors, warehouse dealers, and merchants. Many comparisons could be made with modern commodity markets and tax payments. The Mesopotamian civilizations were obviously far advanced into the era of record keeping. No one historian would have time or energy to translate and read all of the thousands of surviving cuneiform tablets. More historical data has been preserved from the ancient Mesopotamians than from the classical Greeks and Romans. This is due to the fact that the Mesopotamians wrote on clay, which has survived remarkably well, rather than on the less durable parchment or papyrus used by others in the ancient world. Some historians, indeed, are beginning to warn that the present period, with its heavy reliance on telephone messages and unsubstantial computer disks, may also compare unfavorably with Mesopotamia in preservation of records. Time will tell.

**How the Cuneiform Tablets Came to Bethel**

They arrived at Bethel College by pick-up truck in 1952 as part of the Rodolphe Petter Collection. Dr. Rodolphe Petter (1865-1947) and Bertha Kinsinger Petter (1872-1967) were widely known Mennonite missionaries to the Cheyenne Indians in Oklahoma and Montana. A Swiss-born immigrant to America, Dr. Petter was a linguist of extraordinary talent. His Cheyenne lifework was both evangelistic and linguistic. From their mission post at Lame Deer, Montana, the Petters produced and published the Cheyenne-English Dictionary, the translation of the Bible into Cheyenne, and many related works. Petter was knowledgeable in the French, German, English, Greek, and Hebrew languages. As missionary and Indian linguist, Petter and his wife collected a rich assortment of Indian artifacts and photographs. Occasionally, they added items, such as the Mesopotamian tablets, from other parts of the world. The history and archeology of the Bible lands intrigued and inspired the Petters.[2]

Their source of Mesopotamian artifacts was Edgar James Banks (1866-1945), an archeologist who ran a little "mail-order" business in Near Eastern items out of his home. Banks was a flamboyant scholar-entrepreneur, who travelled frequently in the Near East. Ostensibly importing archeological items on behalf of various universities and scholarly institutes, he also shipped in a large selection both for personal use and re-sale. Such a practice was fairly common at the time. Banks found the Petters to be ever-interested customers.[3]

Banks's career was romantically exotic. Politically, he had once served as American consul at Bagdad (1897-98) and as secretary to the American ambassador to Turkey in 1903. He was also a university scholar, with degrees from Harvard and the Ph. D. from the University of Breslau. In 1903 he helped with a University of Chicago excavation of Bismya, and wrote a book which described his work as "a story of adventure, of exploration, and of excavation among the ruins of the oldest of the buried cities of Babylonia." Petter owned this book.[4] The Bismya excavation produced "several thousand inscribed objects" for the University (and perhaps more than a few for Banks himself). During a second expedition for the University of Chicago, he was field director of the "Expedition of the Oriental Exploration Fund to Babylonia." This was a forerunner project of the Oriental Institute of the university, established in 1919. Many other adventures followed, including a climb to the summit of Mt. Ararat, crossing the Arabian desert by camel, and writing many books and "several hundred articles."[5] In his later years, he returned to the United States to do writing, lecturing, and mail-order selling of his archeological artifacts.

The first dealings between Banks and Petter occurred in 1924. Operating out of Alpine, New Jersey, Banks sent Petter at Lame Deer a parcel of nine tablets "on approval." "I take pleasure in sending to you by parcel post a collection of nine of the tablets," Banks wrote. "I have carefully selected those which would be of special interest to you in your work, and which relate as closely as possible to Bible history." Because of Petter's avowed interest in objects related to the Bible, Banks sent tablets mentioning Ur and Nebuchadnezzar. Banks guaranteed all to be genuine. Petter was to examine them at the home, "select those which you desire, and return the others to me as soon as possible."[6]

On his missionary salary, Petter did not have much money to spend on such non-essential purchases, but he bought three tablets at this time. By buying broken tablets, repaired with cement, and other imperfect ones, he got the most for his money. Banks suggested to him that he buy the broken ones; "I assume that you would prefer these to the more perfect tablets, which are smaller, and of a much greater price. I have made the prices as low as it is possible to make them, because of my interest in your work."[7]

Once their mail business was begun, Banks and Petter kept up the correspondence. During the 1930s, the Petters bought at least two more items from Banks, now located at Eustis, Florida. In 1934 he had some choice items to offer from Bagdad, terra cotta cones about four inches long and in perfect condition. According to Banks:

> The owner of the collection sent it to me expecting that I would buy it, but I am not able to do so. I am returning it all but the cones, and they are so rare and valuable that they should be kept in this country. Therefore I am offering them to a few who would appreciate them for just the same price that I must pay for them, that is $15 each, without any profit whatever for myself. They are worth much more than that. I am wondering if you would care to have one of them to add to the collection of Babylonian tablets which you obtained from me some time ago? If so, I should be pleased to send one of them to you to see, and of course it may be returned should you not wish to keep it.[8]

*Edgar J. Banks, 1903-04.*

Petter did not buy immediately, but in 1936 he purchased one of these terra cotta cones to add to his previous collection of flat tablets. Banks sent this 4,000 year old cone, "positively" guaranteed to be the genuine ancient Babylonian original, by parcel post. The price was $12 and it came with a translation by Professor Robert Pfeiffer of Harvard and Banks (quoted above).[9]

The terra cotta cone was stored carefully away with the other cuneiform pieces. Mrs. Petter "placed them in a tin container for better preservation," a half gallon Karo can. Dr. Petter added a note: "This contains an ancient inscribed cone from Ur of the Chaldeans purchased on Dec. 4 from Dr. Edgar J. Banks, Eustis, Florida. Very valuable because of its history." (dated Dec. 4, 1936)[10]

A good idea of the scope of Banks' wares and his sales techniques can be seen from a sales sheet he sent out, undated but from about 1934-35.[11]

THE ENTIRE COLLECTION of ancient Egyptian, Babylonian and other Oriental objects of DR. EDGAR J. BANKS, formerly Field Director of the Babylonian Expedition from the University of Chicago, American Consul to Bagdad, etc., (See Who's Who in America) IS OFFERED FOR SALE. It consists of:

Egyptian scarabs and scaraboids, $5 to $90.
Egyptian amulets in the forms of various animals, $4 to $20.
Egyptian ushabti of stone, enamel and wood, $20 to $75.
Egyptian bronze statuettes of the various gods, $25 to $150.
An Egyptian bronze mirror, very fine, $100.
A miniature Egyptian mummy case of carved wood, $100.
Egyptian vases of bronze, alabaster, onyx, etc., $10 up.
Egyptian finger, ear, nose and hair rings of gold, silver, lead and enamel, $2 to $50.
A pair of small Egyptian cymbals of bronze, $12.
Egyptian weights in the form of ducks, slugs, etc., $3 up.
Irridescent Egyptian glass vases and bottles, $15 to $35.
Babylonian terra-cotta contract tablets from 2350 B.C., $2 to $10.
Babylonian inscribed terra-cotta cones used as corner stones:
from Entemena, before 3000 B.C., $25 to $75.
from Gudea, King of Lagash, four types, $25 to $40.
from Libit-Ishtar, King of Isin, $14 to $25. Two types.
Babylonian terra-cotta images or household gods, $5 up.
Babylonian seal cylinders finely engraved with the figures of the gods, priests, etc., $5 to $50.
Babylonian vases of stone and terra-cotta, $10 to $50.
The famous Standard Inscription of Assurnazirpal, King of Assyria from 884 to 860 B.C. engraved on gypsum slab, $450.
A hollow, barrel-shaped, terra-cotta cylinder with long building inscription from the great Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, $200.
Lamps from ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Palestine, Arabia, etc., $3 up.
Large, lion-headed bronze door-knocker from Pompeii, $100.
Pre-Mohammedan irridescent glass vases and bottles, $10 to $35.
Early Arabic terra-cotta vases with raised Kufic inscriptions, $10 up.
One large, thin, gold coin from the Caliphs of Bagdad, rare, $20
Large thin silver coins from the Caliphs of Bagdad, $3 each.
Large thin silver coins from the Persian Zoroastrians, $3 each.
Large stone portrait bust of a nobleman from the tombs of Palmyra, the city of Zenobia, inscribed with name, $500.
Terra-cotta bust of a lady of Palmyra, $75.
Intaglios of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome etc., $6 to $20.
Arabic manuscript Koran, beautifully illuminated, $125.
Large Persian enamelled plaques, about 1100 A.D., rare, $25 to $35.

Each object is positively guaranteed genuine, and not a reproduction, and is priced low for immediate sale. Detailed description of any object, if not sold, will be sent on request, or, if desired, the objects themselves will be sent to people of responsibility for examination on approval.

Edgar J. Banks, Eustis, Florida.

In 1937, Banks and the Petters had another transaction. Mrs. Petter became interested in Banks' stock listed on his sales sheet as "Babylonian terra-cotta images of household gods, $5 up." Banks wrote to her:

> In my collection of Babylonian antiquities of which I wish to dispose are several household gods similar to those which Rachel stole from her father, according to the Biblical story in the 31st chapter of Genesis. These terra cotta images were made by the temple priests that the people might place them in niches in the walls of their houses to drive away the evil spirits which were supposed to cause all sorts of diseases and misfortunes. They come from every period of Babylonian history, varying with the age. They were made in both human and animal forms, sometimes finely moulded, and often grotesque. They were so sacred that to steal one, or to break one intentionally, were crimes punishable with death. Few of them have been found in a perfect condition, for the enemy, when attacking a town, first sought to destroy the gods. They are now very scarce and valuable for the study of the very ancient times.
>
> These images are priced from $5 to $40 each according to their condition.[12]

Mrs. Petter sent in an order, and Banks responded (December 14, 1937) by mailing two of his household gods. Each of the images had a number printed on its back. Mrs. Petter bought No. 7, a female (now 6514.5) and presumably returned the other. Banks described the little goddess,

> No. 7. $5. It was found at Warka, the ruin of the ancient Biblical city of Erech, which was the center of the worship of the goddess Ishtar. It represents Ishtar holding a vase for the offerings in her hands. The image is rather small, and it was formed in a mould in the usual manner. It comes from before about 1000 B.C.
>
> I positively guarantee that these two images are the geniune ancient originals and not reproductions.[13]

Having purchased these treasures, Mrs. Petter added them to the others in the tin container. This was the last transaction between Banks and the Petters. Banks died in 1945, Dr. Petter in 1947.

In 1952, Mrs. Petter donated all of these Mesopotamian items, together with the Cheyenne collection, to Bethel College. The Petter Indian collection had become well known, and there was competition from various institutions to gain the collection. Bethel was fortunate to win the prize. In 1949, before the final decision had been made, Mrs. Petter wrote to Charles Kauffman, curator of the museum at Bethel: "The president of one unit of the University of

*Cylander seal, left, c. 350 B.C. (no. 3523.1, Rudi Wiens collection). To the right is the impression made by the seal.*

Montana located in Billings, made a special trip out here to see the collection. He also came to urge me to keep it in Montana. I told him I had not fully decided but had thought of sending it to the constituency that supported my husband's work for over a century. I also told him of your fine collection."[14]

The actual transportation of the collection from Lame Deer to North Newton, Kansas had a slightly adventuresome flavor. The prime mover was the Reverend John F. Schmidt of Bethel College, who drove out to Montana in a "shining Studebaker pick-up with bright red cattle racks." Everything was carefully packed aboard, including the Karo tin filled with cuneiform tablets. Then, Mrs. Petter waved the Studebaker farewell—John F. Schmidt at the controls—and "the pick-up, piled high with values incalculable, is rolling on to Kansas" (June 17, 1952). Schmidt remembers the trip well, especially running out of money for gasoline and finally coasting into the CO-OP station at North Newton, absolutely dry.[15]

The Cheyenne and linguistic objects were installed into a Petter display in the Mennonite Library at Bethel; the cuneiform tablets were transferred to the Kauffman Museum, also on the Bethel campus. There they joined a handful of other items derived from ancient history, mostly from the Rudi Wiens donation. The prize of the Wiens collection is a cylinder seal, dated about 350 B.C., Babylonian or Persian (no. 3523.1).

## Translating the Cuneiform

With the fall of the empires of Mesopotamia, their languages became dead languages. From about the second century B.C. up to the nineteenth century A.D., the use of the cuneiform writing was lost. No one could read the ancient tablets with their strange markings. Then in the nineteenth century, the secret was once again deciphered by scholars such as George Grotefend and Sir Henry Rawlinson.[16]

The work of reading and translating the thousands of tablets stored around the world in museums was slow, and additional tablets were dug up yearly. Apart from the terra cotta cone, which had been translated by Pfeiffer and Banks, the rest of the Petter tablets remain unread. Petter apparently had no results from any translating which he himself tried to do. They also lie unread at Bethel. Recently, Professor Victor Matthews of Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield undertook a project to examine the cuneiform cone and tablets. Considerable new information about the cuneiform writings was gained, but a full translation of the cuneiform proved impossible. Because of damage and wear on the texts, they were too fragmentary for a complete translation. Nevertheless, as Professor Matthews stated, having contact with the work of scribes thousands of years old helps us "to understand the ties we all have with the past." It is also interesting to recall the circuitous travels by U.S. mail and pick-up truck which brought the cuneiform tablets from Mesopotamia to Montana to Kansas.

ENDNOTES

[1] Terra cotta cone text, no. 6514.1, translated by Robert Pfeiffer and Edgar J. Banks; Banks to Rodolphe Petter, Nov. 19, 1936 (Petter file, Kauffman Museum at Bethel College).

[2] The Petter MS. Collection (no. 31) at the MLA, Bethel College, contains full details on Petter; also see Margaret Dietzel, "Rodolphe Petter: A 'Called Linguist' " (Social Science Seminar Paper, 1971) and Petter's own story, "How I Became a Missionary," *Mennonite Life*, 10 (Jan. 1955), 4-13.

[3] On Banks, see *Who Was Who in America*, III (1960), 47.

[4] List of books in Petter library, 1935 (Petter MSS., file 153).

[5] *Who Was Who*, III, 47. For information about Banks's association with the University of Chicago, I wish to thank John A. Larson, museum archivist, for his letter to the author (Aug. 15, 1985).

[6] Banks to Petter, May 12, 1924 (Museum Petter file).

[7] Ibid.

[8] Banks to Petter, Oct. 5, 1934 (Museum Petter file).

[9] Banks to Petter, Nov. 19, 1936 (Ibid.)

[10] Notes in Museum Petter file.

[11] Petter Museum file.

[12] Banks to Mrs. Petter, Oct. 30, 1937 (Museum Petter file).

[13] Banks to Mrs. Petter, Dec. 14, 1937 (Ibid.)

[14] Mrs. Petter to Charles Kauffman, Aug. 5, 1949 (Ibid.). On Kauffman Museum, see Steve Friesen, "The Kauffman Museum," *Mennonite Life*, 32 (June 1977), 14-20; Barbara Thieszen, "A Museum at a College" (Social Science Seminar Paper, 1981).

[15] Mrs. Petter to "Dear Friends," June 17, 1952 (Petter Collection, file 70); John F. Schmidt interview, July 1985.

[16] Tom B. Jones, *Paths to the Ancient Past* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 46-61.

# Mennonite Resistance to Draft Registration

**by Mark Becker**

In an attempt to signal to the Soviet Union his disapproval of their invasion of Afghanistan, President Jimmy Carter announced in his State of the Union address on January 23, 1980, his intention to revitalize the Selective Service System. "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America," Carter stated, "and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." He wanted to begin draft registration in order to "meet future mobilization needs rapidly if they arise."[1]

On April 1, 1975, President Gerald Ford terminated the registration program that had been in effect since 1948. The Selective Service System had not issued any draft induction orders since December, 1972.[2] On July 2, 1980, President Carter issued a Presidential Proclamation that ordered registration procedures to begin once again. All males born in 1960 and 1961 were to register during the two week period of July 21 to August 2, 1980. Men born in 1962 were to register during the week of January 5 to 10, 1981. Continuous registration was to begin again on January 5, 1981, which meant that starting with those born in 1963, men were required to register within thirty days of their eighteenth birthday.[3]

Draft registration was not reinstated without several hitches. Thirty thousand people marched in protest against registration and the draft in Washington, D.C. on March 22, 1980.[4] When the Senate began its debate over appropriating to the Selective Service the funds needed to carry out registration, Senator Mark Hatfield, a Republican from Oregon, led a seven day filibuster against registration.[5] Even the Selective Service itself had, previous to Carter's State of the Union address, declared peacetime registration to be "redundant and unnecessary."[6]

Initially, Carter wanted to include women in the registration procedures. "There is no distinction possible, on the basis of ability or performance, that would allow me to exclude women from an obligation to register," Carter stated. Congress, however, voted against including women in the registration program. Robert Goldberg filed a court case against the Selective Service System claiming that a male-only draft was discriminatory and unconstitutional. On July 18, 1980, three days before registration was to begin, the United States District Court in Pennsylvania ruled in favor of Goldberg and enjoined the Selective Service from carrying out its registration plans. The next day the Selective Service obtained a stay of this decision pending a Supreme Court review of this decision.[7] Almost a year later, on June 25, 1981, the Supreme Court, in a six to three decision, reversed the District Court's ruling. In determining that a male-only draft was constitutional, the court observed that women would not serve in combat and that "the purpose of registration is to develop a pool of potential combat troups."[8]

Perhaps the relatively low compliance rate and the legal decisions that resulted from the ensuing prosecutions formed the most threatening resistance to Carter's registration plans. During the first five years of this registration program, over twelve million men were to register, but almost one million failed to do so. The Selective Service took several steps to improve this sagging compliance rate. They engaged in a series of public awareness campaigns, and Congress passed legislation which prevented nonregistrants from receiving federal aid for education and job training programs. The most visable step was the prosecution of eighteen draft resisters. Of these eighteen, three were Mennonites—Mark Schmucker, a student at Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana; and Kendal Warkentine and Chuck Epp, students at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas.

Mark Schmucker's jury trial began on October 1, 1982, in Cleveland, Ohio. He pled "not guilty" because "pleading guilty doesn't give us a chance to challenge the constitutionality of the law—can the government force religious, conscientious resisters to register?"[9] On October 5 the jury found Schmucker guilty, and Judge Ann Aldrich sentenced him to three years of probation, two years of service, and a four thousand dollar fine. However, he was not required to register. Schmucker decided to appeal his conviction in order to test the Selective Service law and to help other court cases, but he did not appeal his sentencing. He began his service at a center for mentally retarded adults in Missouri.[10] A year later the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned Schmucker's conviction, ruling that he should have been granted an evidentiary hearing on the issue of selective prosecution. The government appealed this decision, but Schmucker was released from his service assignment.[11]

Kendal Warkentine and Chuck Epp were both indicted on September 21, 1982, for not registering. In an attempt to be nonresistant to what the government would do to him, Warkentine stood mute at his arraignment. Judge Sam Crow would not accept this, nor a plea of "no contest." Instead, Crow entered a plea of guilty for him.[12] On March 7, 1983, Warkentine was sentenced to two years of unsupervised

probation providing he register on a special form that would acknowledge his conscientious objection. The Kansas State Director of the Selective Service System provided Warkentine with a standard registration form on which he had typed after the statement "I AFFIRM THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE" the addition "and hereby declare that I am conscientiously opposed to serving in the armed forces."[13]

Chuck Epp pled "not guilty" to the charge of not registering and filed a series of pre-trial motions on the issues of selective prosecution, illegal promulgation, and the continuing duty to register. Judge Frank Theis gave the most serious consideration to the selective prosecution motion, but eventually ruled against all of them. In his trial, which began on June 21, 1984, Epp argued that he had already, in essence, registered by way of the letters that he had written to the Selective Service System stating his refusal to register. Judge Theis pressured the government into dropping charges against Epp in exchange for "constructively registering" him with the information he had provided to the government.[14]

These three court cases received national press coverage, but the involvement of Mennonites in draft resistance went far beyond this. In 1982 a gathering of Mennonite draft resisters counted sixty to eighty Mennonite nonregistrants. Of these, twenty attended Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas; ten were at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Virginia; ten at Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana; and four at Hesston College in Hesston, Kansas.[15] These numbers changed from year to year, but undoubtedly many more Mennonites refused to register, many of them keeping very quiet about their resistance.

Luke Hurst and Andre Gingerich, two nonregistrants from Harrisonburg, Virginia, launched the *Mennonite Non-Cooperators' Newsletter* in 1980. This newsletter sought to provide a support network and communication link among Mennonite draft resisters.[16] The editorship of this newsletter was passed between draft resisters at Eastern Mennonite College, Bethel College, and Goshen College. While at Bethel College, the name of the newsletter was changed to *Mennonite Conscientious Resisters' Newsletter* in order to more fully incorporate those who were conscientious resisters without having commited the felony of refusing to register.[17]

In 1983 when the implementation of the Solomon Amendment cut off federal financial aid to nonregistrants, the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church established a "Student Aid Fund for Nonregistrants." This fund replaced lost money for "nonregistrants at Mennonite schools and nonregistrant Mennonite students at other schools who have taken this position by reason of Christian calling and commitment."[18] During the first two years, approximately seventy thousand dollars a year needed to be raised. Although it was a difficult task to raise this money, all of the students' needs were met.[19]

ENDNOTES

[1]"Transcript of Presidents State of the Union Address to Joint Session of Congress," *New York Times*, January 24, 1980, p. A12.

[2]Director of Selective Service, *Semiannual Report of the Director of Selective Service: Jan. 1, 1975 - June 30, 1975*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 1-2.

[3]*Semiannual Report: April 1, 1980 - Sept. 30, 1980*, p. 6.

[4]"Thirty Thousand March on Washington," *Reporter for conscience' sake*, April 1980, p. 3.

[5]"Congress Approves Summer Registration," *Reporter*, July 1980, p. 1.

[6]"SSS Called Registration Unnecessary," *Reporter*, March 1980, p. 5.

[7]*Semiannual Report: April 1, 1980 - Sept. 30, 1980*, p. 19.

[8]*Semiannual Report: April 2, 1981- Sept. 30, 1981*, p. 14.

[9]"Schmucker Trial Nears," *Goshen College Record*, Sept. 24, 1982, p. 3.

[10]Jon Nafzinger, "United States vs. Mark Schmucker," *Mennonite Conscientious Resisters Newsletter (MCRN)*, Oct. 24, 1982, p. 3.

[11]"Schmucker Wins on Appeal," *MCC Draft Counselors' Update*, Jan.-Feb. 1984.

[12]Interview with Kendal Warkentine, N. Newton, KS, June 28, 1984, MLA Oral History collection.

[13]Chuck Epp and Dave Lohrentz, "Bethel Update," *MCRN*, April 5, 1983, p. 3.

[14]Mark Becker, "Finally: U.S. vs. Epp," *MCRN*, Oct. 32, 1984, pp. 1, 5.

[15]Luke Hurst, "Mennonite Nonregistrants Meet at Laurelville," *Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship Peace Notes*, Feb. 1982, p. 3.

[16]"Hello," *Mennonite Non-Cooperators Newsletter*, April 1980, p. 1.

[17]Brian Suderman, "Registrants Resisters, Too," *MCRN*, April 12, 1982, p. 3.

[18]"Student Aid Fund for Nonregistrants," Mark Becker collection.

[19]M. Becker and H. Shenk, "Loss of Aid," *MCRN*, Nov. 20, 1983, p. 4; "Student Aid," *MCRN*, Jan. 24, 1984, p. 7.; "12 Apply for Funds in MC Non-registrant Aid Program," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 8, 1984.

## *INDICTED NONREGISTRANTS (1980-1985)*

| Name and Address | Type of Resistance | Date of Indictment | Date of Trial | Defense Issue | Resolution |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ben Sasway<br>San Diego, CA | Political/<br>Moral | June 30, '82 | Aug. 24-<br>26, '82 | Sel Pros<br>Illegal Prom | Guilty verdict; sentenced on Oct. 4, '82 to 30 months in prison. Lost appeals. Entered prison April 29, 1985. |
| Enten Eller<br>Bridgewater, VA | Brethren<br>Religious | July 13, '82 | Aug. 17, '82 | Religious<br>Defense | Guilty verdict; sentence included registering which Eller refused. Resentenced to 2 years "Alternative Service"; served June '83-Jan. '85 |
| Mark Schmucker<br>Alliance, OH | Mennonite<br>Religious | July 22, '82 | Sept. 20-<br>Oct. 5, '82 | Selective<br>Prosecution | Guilty verdict; sentenced on Oct. 19, '83 to 3 years probation, $4,000 fine and 2 years service. Completed service, but appeal of verdict pending. |
| David Wayte<br>Pasadena, CA | Political/<br>Ethical | July 22, '82 | no trial | Sel Pros<br>Illegal Prom | Won pre-trial hearing on selective prosecution issue, but lost Gov't appeal of decision. Entered "Guilty" plea; sentence pending. |
| Russell Ford<br>Middletown, CT | Philosophical<br>Political | July 30, '82 | April 14, '83 | Philosophical<br>Defense | Guilty verdict; sentenced on June 6, '83 to "time served" (month spent in jail after arraignment). |
| Gary Eklund<br>Des Moines, IA | Moral/<br>Political | Sept. 1, '82 | Oct. 27, '82 | Sel Pros<br>Cont Duty | Guilty verdict; sentenced to 2 years in prison. Lost appeals. Entered prison May 10, '85. |
| Michael McMillan<br>Madison, WI | Philosophical | Sept. 1, '82 | no trial | — | Registered on Dec. 17, '82. Placed on "pre-trial diversion program" that included a year's probation. |
| Gillam Kerley<br>Madison, WI | Moral/<br>Political | Sept. 9, '82 | pending | Sel Pros<br>Illegal Prom | Case dismissed because Gov't refused to turn over material for hearing on selective prosecution. Gov't appealed dismissal. Appeal pending. |
| Chuck Epp<br>Henderson, NE | Mennonite<br>Religious | Sept. 22, '82 | June 21-<br>25, '84 | Constructive<br>Registration | Argued that letters to Selective Service entailed registration. Gov't withdrew case at urging of trial judge. |
| Kendal Warkentine<br>N. Newton, KS | Mennonite<br>Religious | Sept. 22, '82 | no trial | CO Box | Sentenced on March 7, '83 to 2 years unsupervised probation and ordered to register on special form indicating his conscientious objection to war. |
| Paul Jacob<br>Little Rock, AR | Libertarian | Sept. 23, '82 | July 1-2, '85 | Libertarian<br>Defense | Went underground at time of indictment. Arrested Dec. 6, '84. Sentenced to 5 years in prison with 4½ suspended. |
| Rusty Martin<br>Cedar Falls, IA | Political/<br>Moral | Oct. 5, '82 | no trial | Continuing<br>Duty | Sentenced on April 25, '85 to 3 years probation, which included registering, a $10,000 fine and attendance at 2 naturalization ceremonies. |
| Edward Hasbrouck<br>Cambridge, MA | Political | Oct. 6, '82 | Dec. 15, '82 | Philosophical<br>Defense | Guilty verdict; given a 6 months suspended sentence, 2 years probation and 1,000 hours community service. Imprisoned Nov. 22, '83 - April 9, '84. |
| Dan Rutt<br>Detroit, MI | Religious | Jan. 20, '83 | pending | Selective<br>Prosecution | Activity postponed pending the *Wayte* decision. |
| Sam Matthews<br>Richmond, IN | Baptist<br>Religious | March 10, '83 | July 14, '83 | Constructive<br>Registration | Guilty verdict; sentenced Aug. 26, '83 to year and a day in prison. Released 3 months later when *Schmucker* decision overturned. |
| Steve Schlossberg<br>Minneapolis, MN | Presbyterian<br>Religious | Oct. 3, '83 | no trial | CO Box | Registered in exchange for a SSS letter acknowledging his CO claim. Placed on 90 day "pre-trial diversion" program. |
| Andy Mager<br>Syracuse, NY | Moral/Social/<br>Political | Aug. 22, '84 | Jan. 8-<br>10, '85 | International<br>Law | Guilty verdict; sentenced on Feb. 4, '85 to 3 years in prison with 2½ years suspended. |
| Phetsamay Maokhamphio<br>Nashville, TN | Philosophical | Dec. 13, '84 | no trial | — | First private nonregistrant indicted. Registered and placed in a pre-trial diversion program on March 22, '85. |

(code: Sel Pros = Selective Prosecution; Cont Duty = Continuing Duty; Illegal Prom = Illegal Promulgation)

# Anabaptism and Mormonism: A Study in Comparative History

by William Juhnke, Jr.

Sixteenth-century Anabaptism and nineteenth-century Mormonism, though separated by an ocean and 300 years of history, have yet been the subject of comparative study in recent years.[1] The lure of the comparison for me is unique. I am a Mennonite, a direct descendant of sixteenth century Anabaptism, teaching history in a Reorganized Latter-Day Saints community with immediate roots in Mormonism of the nineteenth century. The call to this study was sharpened by the perceptive treatment of the topic by Utah Mormon historian Michael Quinn. As I listened to his paper, read at a Mormon History Association meeting, I wondered what kind of insights and observations might arise by viewing the matter from the Anabaptist perspective. In this essay I have that opportunity.

Mormonism and Anabaptism present, at the outset, a problem of definition. Mormonism is tied inextricably to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, the founding prophet and the inspirational document. However, it is not quite so easy to get a fix on Anabaptism. Generally the term "Anabaptist" refers to all sixteenth-century groups that insisted upon adult baptism as a qualification for church membership. As it was used by their detractors, the term was a "catch all" label applied to the entire left wing of the Reformation. Included were spiritualists, inspirationists, millenarians, unitarians, universalists, social revolutionaries, and other *Schwaermer*, as Martin Luther called them.[2] While not all of these groups were "re-baptizers," Anabaptism was a much more diverse movement than Mormonism. Instead of comparing these two, in fact, one might more appropriately compare sixteenth century Anabaptists to the entire range of socio-religious experimentation that surfaced in the so-called Second Great Awakening of early nineteenth-century America, of which Mormonism was only the most bizarre case. Our comparison is compromised by this untidiness, but for the purposes of this paper, one must live with the ambiguity.

Perhaps every radically new religious departure must have its founding moment, its prophetic voices, and its strong organizational leaders; its John the Baptist and descending dove, its Christ to establish the way, and its Saint Paul to found and secure the churches. Certainly Anabaptism and Mormonism are no exceptions.

Anabaptism's crystalizing moment was in Zurich, Switzerland in the home of Felix Manz, on a cold winter evening in 1525. The dozen men gathered there for prayer and Bible study were anxious for their souls as well as their lives. They belonged to a group recently condemned and banished by the Zurich city council for advocating adult baptism. In a dramatic moment on bended knee, one of their number, George Blaurock requested that the group's spiritual leader, Conrad Grebel, baptize him upon profession of personal faith and commitment. And thus Anabaptism was born. "This was clearly the most revolutionary act of the Reformation," one historian has written, for it emphasized "personal commitment to Christ" as necessary for baptism, as Catholics, Lutherans and Swiss Reformers did not.[3] It was a pretentious, foundational moment.

Mormonism began with Joseph Smith, not so much with his first grove experience where, Joseph records, that as a young man he received a vision and a special promise; nor does it begin with the translation of the Book of Mormon for all the inspirational significance to the Church of that book. Rather it begins in 1829 with the dramatic "mutual vision" of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. In their vision John the Baptist brings a restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood and a command for Smith and Cowdery to baptize each other in the true faith. Whatever the particulars of that experience, for the impact it left on its participants, it was foundational, prophetic, and authoritative.[4]

Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church in response to "direct revelation," and it was direct revelation again that established Joseph as seer, translator, prophet, and apostle of Jesus Christ.[5] The revelations included in the Mormon Scripture called the *Doctrine and Covenants* were more important for doctrine and policy of the Church than was the Book of Mormon.[6] Revelation would be the open door for more and more innovation and peculiarity within the Mormon Church. Prophecy, in fact, was one of the most distinctive marks of nineteenth century Mormonism.

In contrast, prophecy and vision played a much lesser role for Anabaptists. Certain inspirationist Anabaptists did make claims to direct, eternal communication. Chief among these was Melchior Hoffman who saw himself as the revived prophet Elijah. Hoffman's visions dealt with the imminence of the Second Coming and the preparations necessary for Christ's expected reign. The visionary rule of Jan Van Leyden at Muenster (1534-35) was the fanatical high point of Anabaptism. Anabaptists took over the city, proclaimed it the New Jerusalem prepared to usher in the millennium and were systematically slaughtered when it failed to arrive.[7] Yet no one individual established a corner on prophecy of direct revelation for the Anabaptists, and prophecy remained uncharacteristic of the movement as a whole, especially after Muenster. Most Anabaptists preached, not direct revelation, but Biblical Christianity.[8]

The role of organizational leaders, among Anabaptists and Mormons, has obvious parallels as well. After the Muenster disaster of 1535, Anabaptists were hopelessly divided, shepherdless, and on the run. A leader with extreme dedication and talent was required if Anabaptism were to survive at all. Such a leader was Menno Simons. Traveling, exhorting, writing books and letters, and emphasizing the moderate, less

contentious aspects of Anabaptism, he was able to aid in an Anabaptist recovery in the Netherlands and Northern Germany.[9] A similar role was played by Peter Reidemann among the Moravian Anabaptists (Hutterites), and by Pilgram Marpeck among the South Germans.[10]

With the Mormon prophet slain in 1844 and Mormons driven once again from their established community, organizational and administrative skill was required to survive the crisis. Brigham Young, president of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, as the "restored" church organization was called, was equal to the task.[11] A majority of the faithful followed him on an improbable trek to an improbable place in the intermountain West. Administrative genius, rigorous dedication, command of religious discipline, and a haven in an unwanted, arid, isolated region enabled Young to succeed where Smith's leadership had essentially failed in Kirtland, Jackson County, Far West, and ultimately Nauvoo. A similar though not as dramatically successful role was played by Joseph Smith III as he reorganized those who refused for one reason or another to join Young in the West.[12]

Both Mormons and Anabaptists had their founding moment, their prophetic voices, and their organizational leaders.

Nineteenth century America with its unsettled frontier, its growing secularism and democratic pluralism, and its constitutional guarantees of religious liberty, seem a far cry from sixteenth-century Europe with its pervasive religiosity, its undemocratic social and political structure, and its ideological intolerance. Witches, heretics, and other offenders of society were tortured and decapitated or burned at the stake with regularity. Yet there are some features of the milieus of the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries that are similar.

The most notable is the atmosphere of social unsettlement and religious revival. The cement of Medieval society, by 1525, was breaking up. The feudal-manorial system was giving way to nation-state system and early forms of capitalism. The Renaissance, with its humanism, secularism, urbanism, and individualism had blossomed forth; and the Lutheran revolt, begun in 1517, against Catholic tradition and corruption, opened a Pandora's Box of religious possibility. A peasants' revolt, ruthlessly put down in 1525 with the blessing of Luther, as well as Anabaptism, was in that box.

American society in the early nineteenth century was also marked by social unsettlement and religious revival. The race to the frontier after the War of 1812 was anything but orderly, and it enhanced the American inclination of individualism and competition. A growing materialism and secularism was threatening to undermine traditional values. One response transcending this atmosphere was the formation of numerous reform groups that flourished especially after 1830. Another was the Second Great Awakening, a religious revival of far-reaching proportions. Millerism, the Oneida Community and Mormonism were on the fringes of that revival.[13] In sum, it is not surprising that religious movements spawned in these somewhat similar environments, though separated by an ocean as well as 300 years, should have some features in common.

Anabaptist sectarian revivalists, were not interested in merely reforming existing ecclesiastical structures of sixteenth century Europe; they intended rather to establish the true church upon an apostolic foundation. It was on this point, that Anabaptists differed most sharply from other reformers of the sixteenth century. "Sensing that the church idea itself was wrong," one Anabaptist historian has observed, "they worked toward the restitution of the church fellowship in the New Testament pattern."[14] The basis of authority for the particulars of this restoration (from the appropriate sacraments to church discipline) was the Bible, largely the New Testament. Theirs was the "one true church," they believed, precisely because it faithfully restored Biblical, primitive Christianity.

Mormonism was even more insistently and explicitly, if that is possible, a Restoration Movement. Mormons, as Anabaptists, noticed the apostacy of the church after the second century of the Christian era. That apostacy, according to Mormons, was not repaired during the Reformation but continued until the nineteenth century Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.[15] The Anabaptist lynchpin for restoration authority was the Bible. For the Mormons, as mentioned earlier, the basis of restoration authority was direct revelation to Joseph Smith. In a sense, the Anabaptists narrowed their focus in Scripture. Most looked to the New Testament or to the four gospels, and within them primarily to the Sermon on the Mount. The Mormons expanded their Scriptural base. Through Joseph Smith, the vessel of revelation, they received an Inspired Version of the Bible with expanded sections; a heretofore unknown scripture, the *Book of Mormon,* which chronicled an ancient religious history of the Americas including a visitation of Jesus Christ; a collection of revelations, the *Doctrine and Covenants*; and the *Pearl of Great Price.* These new scriptures provided a unique basis for the Restoration of the "one true church." They recovered a church organization: A restored priesthood, "Aaronic and Melchesidec," patriarchs, seventies, evangelists, and even a renewed council of twelve apostles.[16] Moreover their vision of the restoration was drawn as much from the experience of Book of Mormon Nephites and Old Testament Israelites as it was from the experience of the New Testament Christians. Hence, the sense of a "chosen people of God" and the emphasis upon building Zion, both Old Testament and Book of Mormon concepts, marked the Mormon lifestyle in the nineteenth century.[17]

The emphasis on a "gathered," disciplined community, part and parcel of Anabaptism and Mormonism, led in both groups to experimentation with economic communitarianism. Some modern writers have considered early Anabaptists as forerunners of Marxian socialists. Preserved Smith called them, "The Bolsheviks of the Reformation."[18] In the Kingdom of Muenster, 1534-35, under prophetic inspiration and pressures of military siege, a politically supervised communism was in fact introduced.[19] A more enduring example, was the community of goods in both production and consumption established under the leadership of Jacob Hutter among the Moravian Anabaptists.[20] The pledge of communalism was part of their baptismal affirmation. The majority of Anabaptists, however, though they were labeled communistic *Schwaermer,* never did inaugurate "a community of goods." They did teach and practice the principle of Christian mutual aid, which, given their persecution, they had much call to do.

While the Mormons were not the only experimenters with communitarianism in nineteenth century America, they were, in the end, the most persistent and effective. Cooperativism was perhaps made imperative by the Mormon experience which was always a struggle for survival. "A special group consciousness was formalized and given theological expression early in a revelation relating to economic activity."[21] The divine decree provided that the faithful consecrate all property to the Bishop, who would return it to them on

the basis of just wants and needs. Annual surplus was to be consecrated as well and placed in the Bishop's "storehouse" for community distribution.[22] This rigid socialistic communitarianism was abandoned early, but Church involvement in the economic life of the community characterized the Mormon experience in the nineteenth century, expecially in the settlement and development of the Great Basin Kingdom in the intermountain West.[23]

The Restoration emphasis, in both Anabaptism and Mormonism, set each group aside from the world. Anabaptists were set apart by their unique view of the church and by their strict discipline, as mentioned above, but they were set apart as well by their view of the world. Permeating Anabaptist thought was the doctrine of the two kingdoms, one of Satan and one of God.[24] The view demanded that one either compromise with sin or reject it totally. Hence most Anabaptists believed that true Christians should withdraw as far as possible from the world, including its civil and social institutions.[25] Generally, Anabaptists refused to serve as magistrates and as soldiers. They would not pay war taxes to the State or take oaths of obedience to it.[26] Little wonder, given the sixteenth century world view, that they would be seen as subversive of established conceptions of law and order, that they would be viewed with as much mistrust as they viewed the world.

Similarly the Latter Day Saints put themselves at odds with the world. That this should have happened is surprising at first glance, given the vaunted religious tolerance in American society and the explicit approval of American institutions in Joseph's revelations. Many things, no doubt, contributed to eventual Mormon isolation, however, the predominant issue setting Mormons apart, making the movement intolerable in American society, was the implicit collusion of church and state.[27] Where Anabaptists were isolated in sixteenth century Europe because they rejected collusion of church and state, the Mormons were isolated in nineteenth century America because they rejected their separation.[28] And of course it was not a state church that Mormons envisioned, but a theocratic state: God's Kingdom would be built in America and it would be ruled by the Mormon Church until the Second Coming.[29] The collusion of church and state was apparent when the Mormon church bought up land and directed business enterprises on the frontier; it was apparent when Mormons cast their votes as a block in democratic elections; it was apparent in Nauvoo where the President of the Church, the mayor of the town, and the head of the Nauvoo Legion were one and the same person; and it was apparent in the intermountain West where Brigham Young was virtual King of the Great Basin Kingdom.[30] This theocratic specter would not have been so threatening had it been weaker, had it been a flop. But it was vigorous, dynamic, successful. Until their theocratic energies could be muted, as they were by the end of the nineteenth century, Mormonism would be isolated, feared, and persecuted. Both Anabaptists and Mormons, because of the very nature of their movements, found themselves at odds with the world, though of course, some of the main reasons for their loneliness were diametrically opposed.

The previous comparison is the underlying explanation for the comparison that follows. Anabaptists and Mormons were persecuted as no other group in their respective societies. In the sixteenth century while Catholics persecuted Lutherans, and Lutherans persecuted Calvinists, they all joined in persecuting Anabaptists. Especially in the aftermath of Muenster were Anabaptists hounded from their homes, disfigured by branding or having their tongues bored, and burned at the stake if they were not quick enough to escape or lucky enough to be overlooked. The death stories and the faithful witness of nearly 800 Anabaptists are recorded in a book called the *Martyr's Mirror.*[31] The persecution, which continued for several centuries, had its effect. Missionary zeal was diffused, and the Anabaptists learned to be the "quiet in the land."

Persecution among the nineteenth century Mormons cannot compete with the *Martyr's Mirror.* Nevertheless, given the context of a society characterized by religious pluralism and toleration, the Mormon experience is noteworthy.[32] "Few episodes in American religious history," wrote Fawn Brodie, "parallel the barbarism of the anti-Mormon persecutions."[33] Until Mormons were driven from Nauvoo, intermittent outbursts of burnings, beatings, murders, and pillaging hounded them wherever they tried to settle in the Mississippi Valley. The brutal slaying of the prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum in 1844 was at the apex of that violence, but it continued even in the intermountain West.[34] Persecution dogged nineteenth century Mormons as it did sixteenth century Anabaptists.

There are a number of other comparisons that could be made. I have tried to highlight the most significant. Mormons and Anabaptists both tended to emphasize free will at the expense of predestination.[35] Both, in their heyday, displayed phenomenal evangelical energy, the Mormons bringing in converts from England and other foreign countries, the Anabaptists called by one historian, "not reformers, but converters."[36] Both, as is generally the case with evangelically fervent groups, believed in the nearness of the Second Coming, though in different individuals and in different times the urgency of that expectation varied;[37] both sported experimentation with polygamy, though the Anabaptist case (Muenster under seige) was rather isolated;[38] and there are other similarities in theological perspective, especially if you pick and choose your Anabaptist and your Mormon.[39] These comparisons are less distinctive, less central or less firm. All in all, nonetheless, the spectrum of similarities is impressive.

Shot through the comparisons developed above are indications of Anabaptist and Mormon distinctives. That differences appear as afterthoughts and not dominant themes, however, does not mean they are insignificant. For example, to note, as I have above, that Mormonism is dominated by one man, Joseph Smith, whereas Anabaptism is dominated by no one individual, is not a casual comment. This fact separates the very nature of the two groups, one authoritarian and unified in structure, the other amorphous and anarchic. There is similar importance in the other suggested differences.

Yet there is one particular difference that I would like to develop in closing. Discounting the example of Muenster, and it was a marginal episode lasting something less than two years, the Anabaptist experience was a movement of weakness, of pacifism, of defenselessness. The overwhelming majority of Anabaptists, especially after Muenster, were pacifists;[40] their reading of the Sermon on the Mount, their understanding of the Christian commitment led them to affirm love and to eschew violence under all circumstances. This brought them into conflict with the state which might have tolerated most of their other peculiarities; the state's very security depended on its ability to fill the places in its armies and constabulary services. And the Anabaptists audaciously re-

fused service in both. But if their persecution was inevitable, their response to it was consistent. They explained to their persecutors the error in persecution for religious belief; exhorted them to repent and see the truth of God's love; and failing to convert them, accepted torture and death with amazing equanimity and love.[41]

This was a response from weakness. I draw it out not to flatter the Anabaptists. Given their non-cooperative, pacifistic inclination, Anabaptists were fortunate to survive at all. They exist today only at the pleasure of selected liberal nation-states as quiet, non-threatening, largely insignificant minorities. Moreover, had Anabaptists been in a position of strength from the outset, perhaps they would have joined in the persecution of weaker groups. But the fact remains that Anabaptists were always weak. Most did not reach for power even from the beginning. That was not how they read their Bibles.

In contrast, the Mormon experience in America was a movement of strength.[42] Mormons positively, resourcefully, and aggressively sought to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Their intentions at the outset were not militant in any way, and undoubtedly, without resistance, they would have proceeded without violence. But their vision, just as the Anabaptist vision, ran directly into conflict with the secular world. Mormons inevitably had to face their persecutors. Had the movement emerged in the sixteenth century, it no doubt would have been forced into the shadows of European life, as was Anabaptism.

When Mormons faced their nineteenth-century American persuctors, notwithstanding an amazing patience and forebearance, they did not respond with non-violence. Mormons publically and privately accepted the idea of force, threatened to use it, and did so occasionally.[43] As the Jackson County settlement was under the gun in 1833, Joseph first published a revelation that ordered his people "to renounce war and proclaim peace" and to bear all indignities with patience.[44] But early in 1834 he issued a more ominous revelation: "And in as much as they gather together against you, avenge me of mine enemies . . . ."[45] When Far West came under attack, understandably, the mood became even more militant. Danite bands, shock troops of the First Presidency, with Joseph's implicit approval, dallied with "Blood Atonement."[46] And Joseph ended an oration in 1838 with "a spine-chilling promise to wreak vengeance on his oppressors."[47] Later the Legion would destroy the opposition press, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, for attacking the prophet. The leadership in the Great Basin Kingdom would display much of the same spirit. It is captured in the words of Brigham Young in the aftermath of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, where Mormons and Indians decimated an anti-Mormon immigrant party. Young suggested a change in the scriptural slogan (Romans 12:19) on the anti-Mormon Memorial erected at Mountain Meadows. "It should read," Young said, "Vengeance is mine and I have taken a little."[48]

Most of the response was understandable and, no doubt, was inevitable given the aggressive and competitive nature of American life and the positive and aggressive appeal of Mormonism. If the sixteenth century is any guide, it was not the response most Anabaptists would have made. Yet the Anabaptists responded from weakness, the Mormons from strength.

As a latter day Anabaptist, I frequently ask myself: Will it ever be possible for mankind to respond from strength with nonviolent love? Just imagine for a moment: What if the Mormons with all their visionary leadership, their positive Zion-building energy, their organization and administrative genius, and their opportunity in a frontier haven—what if they had responded from strength with nonviolent love? Would they have failed miserably, losing their lives and their vision? Or would they have transformed the world?

ENDNOTES

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[3]Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 11; *ME* Vol. I, 54-55 and Vol. II, 572.

[4]Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York, 1975), 74.

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[6]Mario S. DePillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, I (Spring, 1966), 77; *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1963).

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[10]Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 82-88, 97-100; *ME* Vol. III, 491-501 and Vol. IV, 326-28.

[11]O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 77-79; Klaus Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God* (East Lansing, 1967), 140.

[12]O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 71-72.

[13]Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, 1972), 501-09.

[14]Maynard Kaufman, "Anabaptism: An Existentialist Philosophy of Religion," *Mennonite Life*, XIII (July, 1957), 139-40.

[15]O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 134.

[16]*Doctrine and Covenants*, Sections 18, 84 and 107.

[17]O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 137-39.

[18]Preserved Smith, *Reformation in Europe* (New York, 1920), 84-85.

[19]Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 370; *ME* Vol. I, 655.

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[22]*Doctrine and Covenants*, 42:30-35; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1830-1900* (Lincoln, 1958), 7.

[23]O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 186; Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 11-12.

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[25]Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 231.

[26]Friedman, "Doctrine of the Two Worlds," 105-118; Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 196; Quinn, "Parallel to the Anabaptists," 10.

[27]*Doctrine and Covenants*, 98:57, 101:80, and 134:9; J. D. Williams, "Separation of Church and State in Mormon Theory and Practice," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, I (Summer, 1966), 33; Warren Jennings, "The City in the Garden: Social Conflict in Jackson County, Missouri," in F. Mark McKiernan et al., eds., *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, (Lawrence, 1973), 115-17.

[28]Ibid., p. 103; Klaus J. Hansen, "Mormonism and American Culture: Some Tentative Hypotheses," in McKiernan, *The Restoration Movement*, 19-20.

[29]Hansen, *Quest for Empire*, 8-11.

[30]Jennings, "The City in the Garden," 103; O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 99-105; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 508; Williams, "Church and State," 35-38.

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[33]Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 130.

[34]Ibid., Quinn, "Parallel to the Anabaptists," 18; O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 101.

[35]*ME* Vol. III, 891 and Vol. IV, 706-07; De Phillis, "The Quest for Authority," 87; Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 300; O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 28.

[36]Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 193; Bainton, "Church of the Restoration," 142; James C. Juhnke, *A People of Mission* (Newton, 1979), 3; Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 844; O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 51.

[37]*ME* Vol. III, 520; Hansen, "Mormonism and American Culture," 15-16; O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 35, 134; William Mulder, "The Mormons in American History," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXVII (January, 1959), 67-69.

[38]Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 297-308; O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 60-63, 245-49; Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 511-514.

[39]*ME* Vol. III, 18 and Vol. IV, 706-07; Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 134-39; O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 54, 124-25, 146-48; McCue, "Similarities and Differences."

[40]Stayer in his provocative study of *Anabaptists and the Sword* highlights Anabaptist groups that wielded the sword or tolerated it. Yet he acknowledges that the majority of Anabaptists were non-resistant. Stayer, *Anabaptists and the Sword*, 7, 336.

[41]Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 47-48, 194-96; *ME* Vol. III, 897-99.

[42]Hansen, "Mormonism and American Culture," 18-21.

[43]Quinn, "Parallel to the Anabaptists," 11-12.

[44]*Doctrine and Covenants*, 98:16.

[45]*Doctrine and Covenants*, 103:24-27.

[46]Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 216; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, 1977), 223.

[47]F. Mark McKiernan, "Mormonism of the Defensive: Far West," in McKiernan, *The Restoration Movement*, 128-37.

[48]Juanita Brook, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman, 1962), 182-83; Quinn, "Parallel to the Anabaptists," 16-17.

# Only a Memory: Mennonite Pioneers in the San Luis Valley

**by Viola Bergman Hettinger**

My father and mother, Cornelius Funk Bergman and Maria Goertz Bergman, left Hillsboro, Kansas, for the San Luis Valley in early April 1912. He was thirty-two and she was thirty-one. They were still young enough to take on the rugged country to the west with a good measure of vim and vigor.

This wasn't the first time they had pioneered. They had pitted their energies and strength to master the rugged soil of western Kansas. This time, however, they protested greatly that they did not want to go to Colorado.

It was a bad time for them, because they had just buried their only two children—sons Albert, seven years old, and Elmer, only eighteen months old. An influenza epidemic had hit Hillsboro and had taken the lives of the boys, who were just recovering from a siege of measles. A great-grandfather, Johann Bergman, residing at their Kansas home, also died in this epidemic. The deaths occurred in a month's time; therefore, it was a grieving Maria and Cornelius who set out for Gibson and a new life there.

My maternal grandfather, the Reverend Peter J. Goertz of Inman, Kansas, however, persuaded them, along with various other relatives, to trade their Kansas land for acreage and homesites in Gibson, Colorado. Grandfather Goertz had been attracted to this land by brochures from The Charles E. Gibson Company.

The Mennonites were always looking for land, as it was a custom for the head of the household to give each child some land as he grew to maturity and married. If the family was large, as it often was, they had to move to another settlement to acquire sufficient land.

My uncle, Henry S. Goertz, who was married to my father's sister, was especially anxious to go to Gibson as he was an accomplished home builder, and he thought that there would be many new homes for him to build at this new site of Gibson. He finally persuaded my parents to go ahead with the rest of the relatives in this venture, reminding them that, as Mennonites, they could not go back on their word, once given.

Reluctantly, my parents put their belongings into an immigrant boxcar at Hillsboro, Kansas, along with those of other families who were going. Both my maternal grandparents, the Reverend Peter J. Goertz and his wife Maria Unruh Goertz, and my paternal grandparents, Abraham Bergman and his wife Katherina Funk Bergman, were members of this pioneer party. As far as I can determine, there were fifteen to twenty persons in the group. They were Mennonite people who had settled on land in Marion County, Kansas, when they first had come to America as immigrants, except for Reverend Goertz and his family who had settled in McPherson County, Kansas. He had a large family, my mother being the oldest child. This pioneer party included the second generation of the former Europeans who were born and reared in Kansas. My parents were in this generation. Some third generation infants were also in this group.

They boarded immigrant cars in Hillsboro and rode to Salida, Colorado. There it was necessary to transfer all the goods to a narrow-gauge train for the sixty miles to the new site of the town of Gibson. This must have taken some time to do, as I remember my mother saying that the women went shopping in Salida. She had a porcelain pin dish with "Salida" printed on it. Once when I was visiting here she gave it to me, saying she did not want to be reminded of her stay in Colorado!

Although the purchase and trade of the land in Gibson was made December 16, 1911, an exploratory journey probably was made by my Grandfather Goertz. The larger party, with womenfolk and their children, undoubtedly arrived in the middle of April 1912. At this time of the year, the San Luis Valley townsite must have been a somewhat bleak appearing place.

True, the land was level, such as that which they owned in Kansas, and it was surrounded by beautiful mountains, which they did not have near their Kansas property. In front of the homesites lay the beautiful mountains—Blanca, Crestone, and Crestone Needle. The eerie beauty of the Great Sand Dunes also lay before them. Artesian well water bubbled up in numerous places, along with the clouds of escaping gas which was plentiful enough for heating some of the homes of the pioneers.

"Get unloaded, put in a crop, build houses, build a church and a general store" were the prevalent thoughts in the minds of these sturdy pioneers as they took their belongings, piece by piece, from the boxcars.

My father, Cornelius Bergman, and my grandfather, Abraham Bergman, built the new general store and were the proprietors. The store building was approximately twenty-five feet wide and forty feet long. The foundation was of native stone, and the walls were of wood frame with a flat roof, sloping off to the rear on the north side. The front of the store building was to face south from its position on the north side of the square. My father said the land company had formulated a plan to have a town square. He also said there was to be a park with willow trees planted around it to shade people from the hot sun in the summertime.


*Above. Abraham Bergman and Cornelius Bergman in store they owned at Hillsboro, Kansas, shortly before they came to Gibson (ca. 1910).*

*Right. Cornelius and Maria Bergman with Elmer.*

To the rear of the store, approximately one hundred feet away, was an abundant supply of artesian well water which they tapped for domestic use and also for use at the store. Large front windows with a center door were typical of western commercial buildings of this period.

The interior walls were plaster on wood lathe. The floors were of wide, pine planks, and the ceiling was decorated in squares of pressed metal for what was then an up-to-date look. Counters, shelves, and other fixtures were simple compared to the chrome and glass found in stores today. A long, hand-built, wooden icebox lined with metal served for the preservation of perishable items. Ice was obtained on occasional trips to Hooper or Alamosa.

However, on one occasion in July of 1912, the storekeepers filled the icebox with free ice. A hailstorm left large chunks of hail on the roof. Daddy often told how he and Grandfather Bergman shoveled off the roof that day and got enough hail to fill the icebox. A storm of such intensity made him wish that he was back in Kansas, he said.

The store, stocked with supplies purchased with precious money saved for this purpose, found very few customers outside of the small community of Mennonites who settled there. The land around Gibson was sparsely populated at this time. There were, no doubt, many more animals and birds than there were people in the whole county of Saguache. A lone cowboy stopped by the store once in a while. He often appeared suddenly and looked so rugged that my father said he didn't know whether the man was a rancher or a desperado. Usually all the cowboy wanted was a pouch of tobacco, and he was disappointed to learn Mennonites did not sell it.

That all the settlement work was accomplished in a few short months is hard to realize. However, most of the men were good craftsmen and carpenters. They were used to putting up buildings in a hurry and had done this many times before on pioneering escapades. Daddy said they had brought most of the necessary materials with them in the boxcars to build what they needed, and they made a trip to Hooper to get the rest. A trip or two was also made to Del Norte for supplies. My husband told me that Daddy also made a trip to Pueblo and a trip to Denver for staple goods and groceries.

*The Bergman family in 1910 before leaving for Gibson: (l-r) Cornelius Bergman, Albert Bergman, Maria Bergman, Johann Bergman (deceased before leaving), Abraham Bergman II (not known if he went to Gibson), and Agnes Bergman Wohlgemuth. This photo was taken during the mourning for a sister, and thus the crepe on the building and men.*

Since this pioneering party came from the flat lands of Kansas, they were used to seeing the horizon in all directions. None of them cared for the beauty of the mountains and vastness of the Valley. There were the Sangre de Cristos visible in the east; and in the distance to the west there were the beautiful San Juans. Daddy often told me he felt caged in, and he longed greatly for the prairies of Kansas.

"If only I could have seen through Mount Blanca and Crestone, then I could have seen Kansas!" he exclaimed.

The productivity of the land was then very unknown, although the brochures from the land company portrayed a land comparable to the Garden of Eden. The winters in Kansas were cold, but the frigid nights and long winter season of the Valley could not compare to the climate that they had known. The altitude of Gibson is 7,400 feet.

These industrious people from the plains with their great plans to inhabit and plant their Red Turkey Wheat soon became painfully aware that this crop, which had been so bountiful in Kansas, could never grow in the alkali soil and short season of the Valley. The crops grew to about eight inches and then turned yellow, only to die out before heading, and the pioneers' dreams went with them. They had never had to irrigate crops in Kansas, and they did not realize they would need to water in order to have the lush crops they had expected to raise. The age of technology had not yet brought the sprinkler system of irrigation which the Valley uses today.

Disappointment was keenly felt by all of the members of the family, and a determined effort was made to impress upon the shrewd real estate agent that these Mennonite people wanted their properties in Kansas traded back to them. Evidently the land company was willing to do this, but there was one problem. The settlers had spent all the money they had brought with them. With no crops to sell, they wondered how they would get finances to load all their belongings into boxcars again and make the trip back to Kansas. My Grandfather Bergman must have had savings back home, because he was elected to go and get the money for them all to make the trip back.

When Grandfather Bergman got back to Kansas, he persuaded Aunt Agnes

Wohlgemuth to come back with him so he would not have to make the trip alone. They must have taken the train back to Salida, loaded Grandpa's wagon which he had left there with supplies, and made the rest of the journey to Gibson by wagon. They feared being held up for the money they carried along with them. Grandfather argued that they should stop their horse and wagon in a clearing by the road overnight, perhaps behind a tree out of sight. However, Aunt Agnes convinced him that he should stop in the yard of ranchers. Somehow Grandfather had it in his mind that the ranchers were as eager to get their money and supplies as were any others they might meet along the way.

After several days they got back to Gibson only to find most of the pioneer families in bed, too weak from illness and hunger to be active. They had eaten what they thought was the last of their provisions. Aunt Agnes told me that her sister, Helen Goertz, remembered that she had stored a few potatoes under straw in the barn and had made some potato soup to save the lives of the relatives while Grandpa had gone back to Kansas.

After checking the courthouse record in Saguache, I could not determine when these events occurred since some of the land which my people owned was registered as being sold back to Mr. Gibson and other of the property was not shown as sold or, at least, it was not recorded so. I believe my father left in 1913.

My Aunt Helen went with her husband, Henry Goertz, to Texas to raise cotton, and they remained there the rest of their lives. My Aunt Agnes went to Oregon during the depression days and remained there for the rest of her years with her husband Will, and their family. My parents with most of the party returned to Kansas. They had a brief interlude of pioneering in Canada, but they always went back to Kansas, for it seemed to be home to them. My mother wanted to remain close to the burial site of her two sons. The grandparents always told me that they never wanted to go back to the San Luis Valley, and they rarely talked about their experience there.

"When the past has been painful, it is best left alone," my grandfather told me.

To this day, I cannot recall my mother ever speaking of her adventures. Perhaps the fact that she was grieving blocked out all of her memories. However, my father was not like the rest. He had a pioneering spirit in him until the day he died, February 9, 1977, at the age of nearly ninety-seven.

He always told my husband, Jack Hettinger, that he wanted to go back to Gibson to look over the place, and his wish became a reality in 1953 when my father and Jack went to the Valley to look for the old homestead. When I asked my mother whether she wanted to go along, she merely shook her head vigorously.

Jack and my father drove north from Alamosa to Hooper, which had been the banking town of the families who settled in Gibson. My father had kept his store account in a bank there, and I have his bank book in my possession. The meager accounting in it shows that he had sixty dollars with which to stock the store.

Another eight miles of travel north of Hooper brought them to the site of Gibson and the ill-fated general store, which had been on the left side of the highway. Of course, they didn't really know what to expect, but somehow my father believed he would find part of his store and there would be some evidence that it had existed.

As he walked around, he found the crumbled remains of a stone foundation. He picked up a piece or two of the metal squares which once adorned the ceiling of his store.

With a sad look on his face, he said, "I never thought she would end up like this."

Evidence of the artesian well remained, occasionally spouting water twenty to thirty feet in the air. It repeated itself at two- or three-minute intervals. Some of the ponds used for storing water and bits of weathered scrap lumber and foundation materials also were in evidence. The willow trees around the square were now a tangled heap, some reaching forty to fifty feet in the air. Other than that and the grading along with the railroad site where the pioneers unloaded their goods so hopefully, nothing else marked the site.

My father picked up the pieces of ceiling, wiped away a few tears, and declared, "No one but those of us who were here know how hard it was!"

In 1983 I went to the Saguache County Courthouse to see the recorded transactions between the land company and my people. It did not take me long to find the names of my forefathers, neat-

*Cornelius F. Bergman stands amidst the surviving willow trees from the Gibson town square in 1953. (See the map of Gibson on the next page).*

ly penned in ink by the recorder of that day:

C. F. Bergman Charles E. Gibson Warntee Deed 120 532
Lot 24 Blk 9 Town of Gibson
for a general store

Bergman, A. Charles E. Gibson Warntee Deed 120 533
SW ¼ Sec. 5 Township 41
NR 10 E & N Prime Meridian

Goertz, H. S. Charles E. Gibson W.D. 120 520
April 27, 1912
Lot 16 Block 2 Gibson

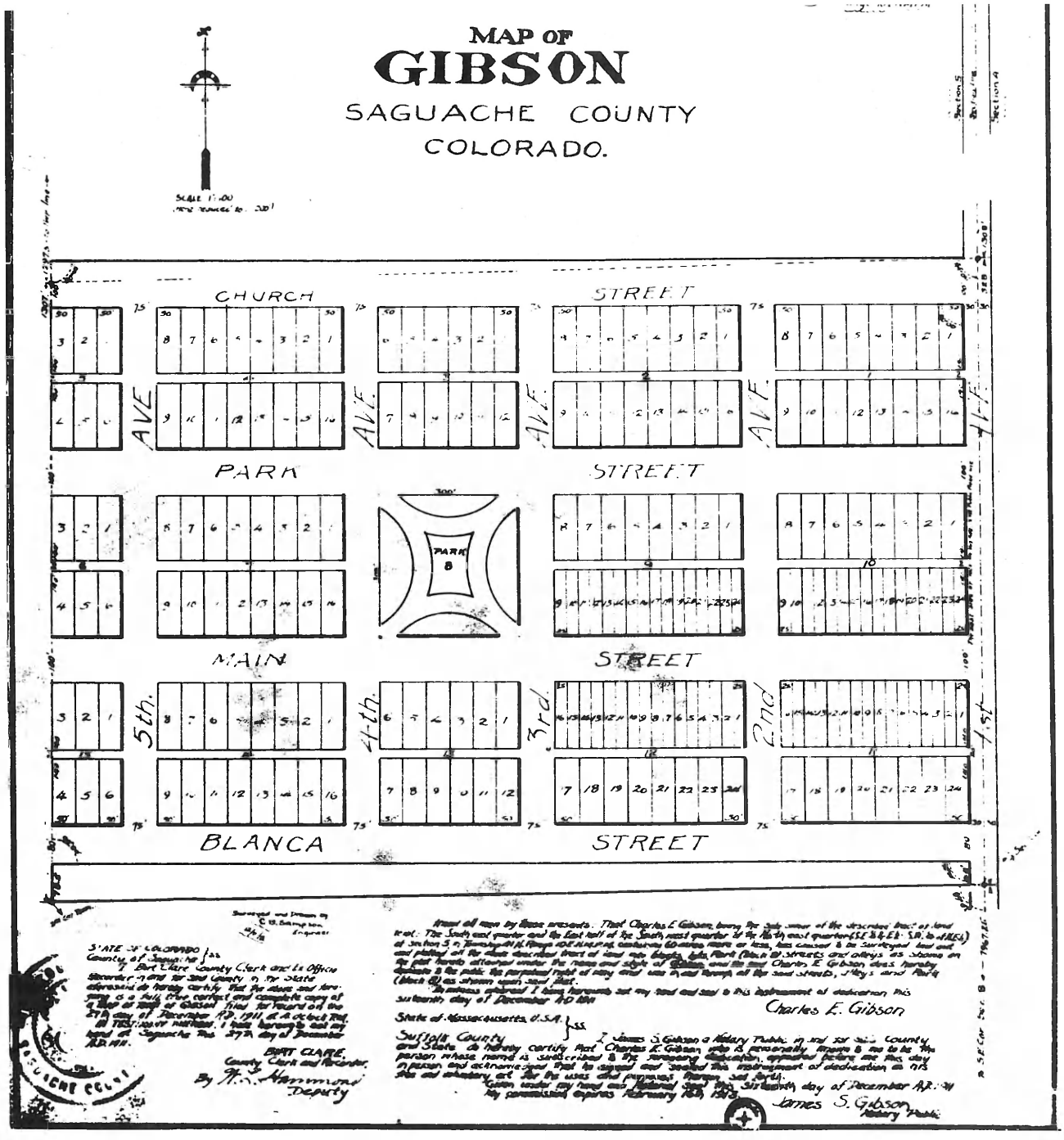
Bergman, A. Charles Gibson W.D. 132 29
October 7, 1912 SW ¼ Sec. 5 Township 41
Sold July 14, 1912, for $1 and other valuable considerations

Goertz, Peter Charles E. Gibson
NW ¼ Sec. 5 West ½
W ½ of NE Sec. 5
NW ¼ and W ½ of W ½ NE ¼
5-41-10.
Purchased 12-26-11 160 acres plus 40 acres to make a total of 200 acres.

Strangely enough, the public records only showed the name of my Grandfather Bergman's quarter section of land being sold back to Charles E. Gibson, but no other sales were recorded or trades mentioned. The records showed that my father had purchased a town site for $150 which represented a goodly amount of my father's savings.

I purchased a copy of the plat of the town of Gibson, which an engineer by the name of C. B. Sampson had surveyed on December 11, 1911. A park was in the center of the plat. That was where the tall willows grew, my father said.

No doubt, the Gibson land company resold this land to the next group of homesteaders who came into the Valley to try to build up the town of Gibson, as it did not immediately die.



# Book Reviews

Rachel and Kenneth Pellman. *The World of Amish Quilts.* Intercourse, Pennsylvania: Good Books, 1984. ($15.95 paperback).

Rachel Pellman. *Amish Quilt Patterns.* Intercourse, Pennsylvania: Good Books, 1984. pp. 128. ($10.95 paperback).

*The World of Amish Quilts* gives the reader a unique look at the Amish and their quilts. Over two-hundred full-color quilt photographs display the beauty of the antique Amish quilts and their use of solid, vibrant color combinations. Usually there are three or four photographs of quilts on each 8.5 x 11 inch page, and more than twenty photographs fill an entire page. Although in most cases the actual quilting pattern is difficult to see, the quilt patterns are very easy to see and enjoy. Accompanying photographs of Amish life often reflect the pattern designs of the quilts—plow wheels and the "Double Wedding Ring," produce baskets and "Baskets," and stars and "Broken Stars," "Lone Star," and "Eight Point Star"—just to name a few. The photographs of both the quilts and the Amish are excellent.

It is interesting to note how the unusual use of color combinations and block placement changes the character of quilts of the same basic pattern. The "Tumbling Block" pattern is one example of how varied color combinations create different overall designs. The illustrations show how the various diamond arrangements can create optical illusions of cubes, hexagons, stars and diamonds. "Robbing Peter to Pay Paul" is another example of how various color combinations create different overall effects. The use of contrasting light/dark colors creates a powerful design, while the use of two subtle colors gives a softer, less vibrant look to the very same pattern. The photographs of the "Roman Stripe," "Bow Tie" and "Fan" patterns show some of the possibilities of varying block arrangements of the same pattern. By arranging blocks in diagonal, vertical or horizontal rows, the impact of the whole top is changed.

The quilts are arranged by pattern with each being illuminated with text and photograph. For example, the "Fan" pattern section has seven photographs of "Fan" quilts showing almost that many variations of the same pattern, and several paragraphs explain what part of the country a variation came from, how it might be put together, and what additional features may be found on the quilts in the photographs. The narrations on other patterns often note the kinds of quilting patterns used, the possible origin of the design, and other interesting information about the quilts.

Interspersed with the many beautiful photographs are information on the Amish and notes on their quiltmaking. The explanations about the Amish help the reader more fully appreciate the quilts as a reflection of their simple lifestyle. Five special sections of the book describe "Color Among the Amish," "Quilts in the Life Cycle," "A Quilting," "Contentment within Limitation," and "Grandmother's Diary." "Grandmother's Diary" is a chronicle of a year in the life of one Amish woman. The book has an excellent bibliography, including books on the Amish people as well as on Amish and other quilts.

*Amish Quilt Patterns* is a companion volume that gives patterns and traceable templates for thirty of the pictured quilts. Several pages of general quiltmaking and quilting helps are included. Easy-to-follow, illustrated instructions show the order of sewing the pieces together, and line drawings of the entire quilts clearly show where each particular piece fits. These drawings could be colored when trying out different color combinations. Included are several traditional quilting templates which can be easily removed for use.

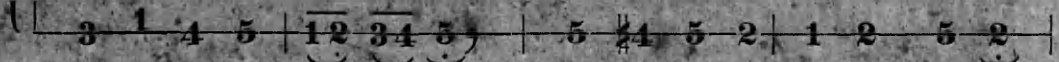
*The World of Amish Quilts* is an attractive and comprehensive Amish quilt book to be enjoyed by both the quilter and non-quilter alike, while *Amish Quilt Patterns* takes the reader even closer to becoming a maker of Amish quilts.

Rose Wiebe Haury
North Newton, Kansas

Arnold Dyck. *Verloren in der Steppe and Aus Meinem Leben. Collected Works of Arnold Dyck,* Vol. I, edited by Victor G. Doerksen, et al. Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1985. pp. 515. ($29.95 Canadian).

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society has reprinted Arnold Dyck's classic novel, *Verloren in der Steppe,* originally published in five parts, 1944-48. Also included is an autobiographical sketch, *Aus meinem Leben,* which complements and goes beyond Dyck's autobiographical material in the novel. This volume is the first of a projected four volume series. The second and third volumes will include Dyck's Low German plays and unpublished works; essays, and letters will comprise volume four.

Most American readers interested in Dyck's novel will still prefer to obtain access to the English translation, *Lost in the Steppe,* translated by Henry D. Dyck (Derksen Printers, 1973). The 1944-48, 1973, and 1985 editions contain Arnold Dyck's illustrations; however, those who choose to read *Verloren in der Steppe* in the original German will greatly appreciate the fine quality of the new "Collected Works." Copies of the original edition must be quite rare, and the smaller type is somewhat difficult to read on the now yellow pages. All libraries with Mennonite collections and all individuals with an interest in Mennonite literature will want to obtain all four volumes of the *Collected Works of Arnold Dyck.*



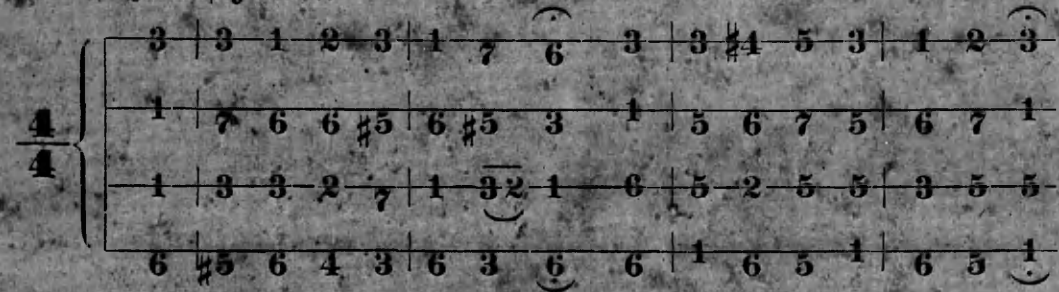
Ei=nen kö=nig=li=chen Geiſt, Mich als Dir ver=lobt zu tra=gen,

All=em freu=dig ab=zu=ſa=gen, Was nur Welt und ir=diſch heißt.

Zu 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8 Silben.

## 53. Vater unſer im Himmelreich.

D moll, a = 3.
Inbrünſtig bittend.



Hilf, o Herr Je=ſu, hilf Du mir, Daſſ ich jetzt kom=me bald zu Dir,

Zu 8, 8, 7, 8, 8, 7 Silben.

## 52. O wie selig sind die Seelen.

G-dur, a = 2.

Sehnsuchtsvoll.